

## Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy

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## Scope

This Policy applies to all:

- (a) City of Parramatta Council (**Council**) Councillors; and
- (b) Staff involved in the administration of Councillor facilities and expenses provision.

## Policy Summary

This Policy:

- (a) has been prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) (**LG Act**) and the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* (NSW) (**LG Regulation**);
- (b) complies with the Office of Local Government's *Guidelines for the payment of expenses and provision of facilities to Mayors and Councillors in NSW* (October 2009);
- (c) enables the reasonable and appropriate reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities to Councillors, to help them undertake their civic duties;
- (d) ensures accountability and transparency and seeks to align Councillor expenses and facilities with community expectations. Councillors must not obtain private or political benefit from any expense or facility provided under this Policy; and
- (e) sets out the maximum amounts Council will pay for specific expenses and facilities. Expenses not explicitly addressed in this Policy will not be paid or reimbursed.

The main expenses and facilities set out in this Policy are summarised in the table below. All monetary amounts stated in the Policy are exclusive of GST.

**DISCLAIMER:** This table is not an exhaustive list of expenses and facilities available to Councillors, and is to be read in conjunction with the body of this Policy document, which details the terms and conditions associated with the provision of Councillor expenses and facilities.

Expense or facility	Standard / Maximum amount	Frequency
General travel expenses	\$5,000 per Councillor \$1,500 additional for the Lord Mayor	Per Term Year
Interstate and overseas travel expenses	\$2,000 per Councillor for interstate travel	Per Term Year

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	All overseas travel expenses must be approved by Council resolution	
Accommodation and meals	As per the <i>Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009 (NSW)</i> , adjusted annually	Per meal/night
Professional Development, including conferences and seminars	\$5,000 per Councillor (includes cost of related accommodation)	Per Term Year
Non-Council functions and other events, including Accompanying Person expenses	\$1,000 per Councillor \$1,000 additional for the Lord Mayor (or their delegate)	Per Term Year
ICT equipment and expenses: (a) Mobile computing device (e.g., tablet or laptop)/multifunction device, computer sim card (b) Mobile phone and related equipment (c) Mobile phone plan including calls and data for Council business (d) Personal internet connection	(a) \$5,000 per Councillor (b) \$3,000 per Councillor (c) Up to \$80 per Councillor (d) Up to \$50 per Councillor	(a) Per Term (b) Per Term (c) Per month (d) Per month
Carer expenses	\$4,000 per Councillor	Per Term Year
Home office expenses: (a) Printer paper, envelopes, and other minor items of consumable stationery (b) Printer ink cartridges	(a) \$500 per Councillor in the first year of a Council Term \$300 per Councillor every year after (b) \$750 per Councillor	(a) Per Term Year (b) Per Term Year
Legal costs related to Code of Conduct complaints	\$3,000 per Complaint	Per complaint
Council letterhead	1,000 per Councillor	Per Term Year

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Business cards	1,000 per Councillor 1,000 additional for the Lord Mayor	Per Term Year
Postage	\$1,000 per Councillor	Per Term Year
Christmas or festive cards	400 per Councillor 400 additional for the Lord Mayor	Per Term Year
Access to facilities in a Councillor common area and access to shared private workspaces/offices, as per clause 8.1	Provided to all Councillors	Per Term
Council vehicle, fuel card, and toll road tag supplied for official use	Provided to the Lord Mayor	Per Lord Mayoral Term
Reserved parking space at Council's offices for the Lord Mayor's Council-issued vehicle, and parking spaces sufficient to allow Councillors to park when in the office or at Council meetings	Provided to the Lord Mayor and Councillors	Per Term
Furnished office incorporating a computer configured to Council's standard operating environment, telephone, and meeting space	Provided to the Lord Mayor	Per Lord Mayoral Term
Councillor corporate uniform and name badge	Name badge provided to all Councillors  Issued upon request: (a) One blazer per Councillor (b) Two neckties / scarves per Councillor (c) One hat per Councillor	Per Term

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	(d) Two business shirts per Councillor (e) Two polo shirts per Councillor (f) One all-weather coat per Councillor (g) One umbrella per Councillor	
Additional Lord Mayor corporate uniform	Issued upon request to the Lord Mayor: (a) One additional blazer (b) Two additional business shirts	Per Lord Mayoral Term

Additional costs incurred by a Councillor in excess of these limits are considered a personal expense that is the responsibility of the Councillor.

Councillors must provide claims for reimbursement within three months of an expense being incurred. Claims made after this time can only be approved at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Detailed reports on the provision of expenses and facilities to Councillors will be published publicly, in accordance with the requirements of the LG Act.

## PART A – INTRODUCTION

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The provision of expenses and facilities enables Councillors to fulfil their civic duties as the elected representatives of the Council.
- 1.2. The community is entitled to know the extent of expenses paid to Councillors, as well as the facilities provided.
- 1.3. The purpose of this Policy is to clearly state the facilities and support that are available to Councillors, to assist them in fulfilling their civic duties.
- 1.4. Council Staff are empowered to question or refuse a request for payment from a

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Councillor when it does not accord with this Policy.

- 1.5. Expenses and facilities provided by this Policy are in addition to fees and superannuation guarantees paid to Councillors. Pursuant to section 241 of the LG Act, the minimum and maximum fees a Council may pay each Councillor are set by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal and are reviewed annually. Council must adopt its annual fees within this set range.
- 1.6. Where a Councillor is entitled to an additional sitting fee, where formally directed by the NSW Government through the Office of Local Government or by Ministerial direction, payments will be arranged in accordance with these directions and confirmed by Council resolution, as required.

## 2. Policy objectives

2.1 The objectives of this Policy are to:

- (a) ensure accountability and transparency in the reasonable and appropriate reimbursement of expenses incurred by Councillors, in the course of discharging their civic duties;
- (b) ensure that the facilities provided to Councillors to carry out their civic duties are reasonable, are at a standard appropriate to the role as a Councillor, and meet community expectations;
- (c) supports a diversity of representation; and
- (d) fulfil Council's statutory responsibilities.

## 3. Principles

3.1 Council is committed to employing the following principles in the provision of Councillor facilities and expenses:

- (a) Proper conduct: Councillors and Staff acting lawfully and honestly, exercising care and diligence in carrying out their functions, in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct.
- (b) Reasonable expenses: Providing for Councillors to be reimbursed for expenses reasonably incurred as part of their civic duties as a Councillor.
- (c) Participation and access: Enabling people from diverse backgrounds, underrepresented groups, those in carer roles, and those with special needs, to

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serve as a Councillor.

- (d) Equity: there must be equitable access to expenses and facilities for all councillors.
- (e) Appropriate use of resources: Providing clear direction on the appropriate use of Council resources in accordance with legal requirements, Council policies, and community expectations.
- (f) Accountability and transparency: Clearly stating and reporting on the expenses and facilities provided to Councillors.
- (g) Appropriate management: Staff must assess expenses in accordance with delegations and this Policy, ensuring sound financial management is followed.

#### **4. Private or political benefit**

- 4.1 Councillors must not obtain private or political benefit from any expense or facility provided under this Policy.
- 4.2 Reasonable private use of Council equipment and facilities by Councillors may occur from time to time (e.g. telephoning home to advise that a Council meeting will run later than expected). Such incidental private use is not subject to a compensatory payment back to Council. Expenditure is monitored to ensure that all personal use remains reasonable.
- 4.3 Councillors should avoid obtaining any greater private benefit from Council than an incidental benefit. Where there are unavoidable circumstances and more substantial private use of Council equipment or facilities does occur, Councillors must reimburse Council.
- 4.4 Campaigns for re-election are considered to be a political benefit. The following are examples of what is considered to be a political benefit during a re-election campaign:
  - (a) production of election material;
  - (b) use of Council resources and equipment for campaigning;
  - (c) use of official Council phone and mobile services, email, letterhead, publications, websites, or services for political benefit; or
  - (d) fundraising activities of political parties or individuals, including political fundraising events.

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- 4.5 Expenses and facilities provided under this Policy are non-transferrable. All exceptions will require the written approval of the CEO.

## **PART B – EXPENSES**

### **5. General expenses**

- 5.1 All expenses provided under this Policy will be for a purpose specific to the functions of holding civic office. Allowances for general expenses are not permitted under this Policy, in accordance with section 403 of the LG Regulation.
- 5.2 Expenses not explicitly addressed in this Policy will not be paid or reimbursed.
- 5.3 All Councillors and Staff must not personally benefit from reward points programs when incurring Council-related expenses, as outlined in Council's Code of Conduct.

### **6. Specific expenses**

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

- 6.1 All travel by Councillors should be undertaken by using the most direct route, and the most practicable and economical mode of transport.
- 6.2 Councillors may be reimbursed up to \$5,000 per Term Year for travel expenses incurred while undertaking Official Business, including attendance at approved Professional Development within NSW.
- 6.2.1 In addition to clause 6.2, the Lord Mayor may be reimbursed up to an additional \$1,500 per Term Year for travel expenses incurred while undertaking Official Business.
- 6.3 This includes provision for expenses such as:
- (a) public transport fares;
  - (b) mileage allowance for the use of a private vehicle on a per kilometre basis, as provided for in the *Local Government (State) Award 2020* (NSW);
  - (c) parking costs for Council and other meetings;
  - (d) a Cabcharge Account or equivalent; and
  - (e) documented ride-share programs (e.g. Uber), where tax invoices can be

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issued.

- 6.4 Councillors seeking to be reimbursed for use of a private vehicle must complete the appropriate Councillors Expense Claim Form as advised by the Executive Support Unit, including providing a log of the date, starting location, destination, distance, and purpose of travel being claimed.
- 6.5 Any Councillor seeking reimbursement for travel expenses above the limit must have the CEO's prior written approval.
- 6.6 Councillors may, upon request, be issued with a Cabcharge Account, the use of which must comply with this Policy.
- 6.7 Councillors may use Cabcharge Accounts for taxi travel for journeys in the Sydney metropolitan region, to assist them to carry out their civic duties.
- 6.8 Upon being issued with a Cabcharge Account, Councillors must agree to the conditions of use for the Account. Council will only meet the cost of taxi journeys undertaken by Councillors for Official Business.
- 6.9 At the end of each Cabcharge Account billing period, each Councillor will receive a statement detailing taxi journeys undertaken during that period. Councillors are required to check the statement, complete an Authority Confirmation Form to verify that all travel listed on the statement is correct, and complete a Business Purpose Form providing the details of, and reasons for, each journey; identifying any non-Council business related journey; and submitting the completed form and matching receipt for each journey detailed on the statement, to the Executive Support Unit, within 14 days of each statement date. These forms will be provided by the Executive Support Unit with the monthly statement.

#### **Interstate and overseas travel expenses**

- 6.10 In accordance with Section 4 of this Policy, Council will assess the value and need for Councillors to undertake overseas travel. Councillors should ensure direct and tangible benefits can be established for the Council and the local community for interstate and overseas trips.
- 6.11 Total interstate travel expenses will be capped at \$2,000 per Councillor, per Term Year.

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- 6.12 Councillors seeking to undertake any interstate travel must submit a business case to the CEO. The business case must include:
- (a) objectives to be achieved in travel, including an explanation of how the travel aligns with current Council priorities and business;
  - (b) who is to take part in the travel, and duration and itinerary of travel; and
  - (c) a detailed budget of any amounts expected to be reimbursed by the participant/s.
- 6.13 Approval for undertaking and reimbursement of costs related to interstate travel, is to be granted by the CEO, in consultation with the Lord Mayor when appropriate.
- 6.14 For approved interstate journeys by air, the class of air travel is to be economy class. Should Councillors book their own air travel, Council will only reimburse up to the cost of a direct economy class airfare with evidence of best value for money assessment.
- 6.15 Councillors seeking to undertake overseas travel must submit a business case to the CEO for consideration and approval by Council resolution. The business case must be submitted by way of notice of motion prior to the meeting, and include:
- (a) objectives to be achieved in travel, including an explanation of how the travel aligns with current Council priorities and business;
  - (b) the community benefits which will accrue as a result, and its relevance to the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties;
  - (c) who is to take part in the travel, and duration and itinerary of travel; and
  - (d) a detailed budget of any amounts expected to be reimbursed by the participant/s.
- 6.16 For approved international travel, the class of air travel is to be premium economy, if available. Otherwise, the class of travel is to be economy. Should Councillors book their own air travel, Council will only reimburse up to the cost of an economy class airfare, or a premium economy class airfare if available, following the most logical route with evidence of a best value for money assessment.
- 6.17 Approved air travel requested to be arranged by Council will be processed by the Executive Support Unit.

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- 6.18 For air travel that is provided or reimbursed as Council business, Councillors are not to accrue any personal reward or loyalty program points (e.g. frequent flyer program). This is considered a private benefit, and is a breach of Council's Code of Conduct.
- 6.19 After returning from interstate or overseas travel, Councillors must provide an information report by way of a notice of motion to the next ordinary Council meeting on the aspects of the trip relevant to Council business and/or the community. If multiple Councillors attend the same event, only one Council report is required.

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

- 6.20 Council will not pay any traffic or parking fines or administrative charges for toll road usage, except for those toll road charges incurred by use of the motor vehicle provided to the Lord Mayor, as per clause 9.3 of this Policy.

### **Accommodation and meals**

- 6.21 Council will meet the reasonable cost of meals and overnight accommodation for Councillors undertaking approved travel or Professional Development for stays outside the Sydney metropolitan region, with associated costs to be allocated from the maximum annual expenditure set out in clause 6.29.
- 6.22 Council will only meet the costs of meals and overnight accommodation within the Sydney metropolitan region with the CEO's prior written approval, with associated costs to be allocated from the maximum annual expenditure set out in clause 6.29.
- 6.23 When undertaking approved travel or Professional Development, Council will meet the cost of any meals and the reasonable costs of beverages accompanying a meal, where any such meals are not provided as part of Professional Development or conference registration fees.
- 6.24 The daily limits for accommodation and meal expenses within Australia are to be consistent with those set out in Part B Monetary Rates of the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009* (NSW), as adjusted annually.
- 6.25 The daily limits for accommodation and meal expenses outside Australia are to be

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determined in advance by the CEO, with consideration given to clause 6.24.

6.26 Councillors will not be reimbursed for the purchase of any alcoholic beverages.

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

6.27 Appropriate refreshments will be made available for Council meetings, Council committee meetings, Councillor briefings and workshops, approved meetings and engagements, and official Council functions, as approved by the CEO.

6.28 As an indicative guide for the standard of refreshments to be provided at Council related meetings, the CEO should give consideration to Part B Monetary Rates of the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009* (NSW), as adjusted annually.

### **Professional Development including conferences and seminars**

6.29 Council will facilitate and promote the Professional Development of Councillors through programs, training, education courses, conferences, seminars, and membership of professional bodies, with a total maximum annual expenditure of \$5,000 per Councillor, per Term Year.

6.30 In the first year of a new Council term, Council will provide a comprehensive induction program for all Councillors, which considers any guidelines issued by the Office of Local Government. The cost of the induction program will be in addition to the Professional Development funding provided for in clause 6.29.

6.31 Annual membership of professional bodies will only be covered where:

- (a) the membership is relevant to the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties;
- (b) the Councillor actively participates in the professional body; and
- (c) the cost of membership is likely to be fully offset by savings from attending events as a member.

6.32 The CEO's prior written approval is required for Council to provide for Professional Development activities, including membership fees for professional bodies. A Councillor's written request to the CEO must outline the:

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- (a) details of the proposed Professional Development;
- (b) relevance to Council priorities and business; and
- (c) relevance to the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties.

6.33 Approval to attend a conference or seminar is subject to a written request to the CEO or by resolution of the Council. In assessing a Councillor request, the CEO must consider factors including the:

- (a) relevance of the topics and presenters to current Council priorities and business, and to the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties; and
- (b) cost of the conference or seminar, in relation to the total remaining budget.

6.34 Council will meet the reasonable cost of registration fees and accommodation associated with attendance at conferences or seminars approved by the CEO, in accordance with clauses 6.29 to 6.33.

6.35 The provisions of clauses 6.1 to 6.9 will apply to transport arrangements associated with a Councillor's attendance at approved Professional Development activities, including conferences and seminars.

6.36 At the CEO's determination, a Councillor may be required to reimburse the Council in accordance with clauses 10.17 to 10.20, if the Councillor does not attend an approved conference or Professional Development activity that they are registered to attend.

#### **Exempt conference and Professional Development programs**

6.37 Councillors may elect to either complete the Local Government NSW (**LGNSW**) Executive Certificate for Elected Members or the full Company Directors Course, conducted by the Australian Institute of Company Directors (**AICD**).

6.38 Councillors may not seek payment or reimbursement of expenses for the LGNSW Executive Certificate or AICD course, in the final year of a Council term.

6.39 Councillors must obtain the CEO's prior written approval before enrolling in the LGNSW Executive Certificate or AICD course, and will be required to provide evidence of attendance of the course.

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- 6.40 At the CEO's determination, Councillors may be required to reimburse Council, in accordance with clauses 10.17 to 10.20, if the Councillor is registered to complete the LGNSW Executive Certificate or AICD course and does not attend.
- 6.41 All Councillors may attend the LGNSW Annual Conference.
- 6.42 Registration costs associated with attendance at exempt conferences and Professional Development programs will not be counted towards the monetary limits for Professional Development expenditure, set out in clause 6.29. This includes costs relating to accommodation and meals, where applicable.
- 6.43 The provisions of clauses 6.1 to 6.9 will apply to transport arrangements associated with LGNSW Annual Conference attendance.

#### **Council representation at non-Council functions and other events**

- 6.44 Council will meet the entry fee/ticket cost associated with attending dinners, non-Council functions, community, charitable, and corporate or industry events where Councillor representation would be appropriate, such as award nights which are relevant to Council's interests, to a limit of \$1,000 per Councillor, per Term Year.
- 6.45 At the CEO's determination, a Councillor may be required to reimburse the Council in accordance with clause 10.17, if the Councillor does not attend an event that they are registered to attend.
- 6.46 The CEO's prior written approval is required when seeking Council payment for attendance at dinners, non-Council functions, and community events, where there is an associated cost; with a written request required where the cost exceeds \$250.
- 6.46.1 In addition to clause 6.46, Council will provide an additional budget of up to \$1,000 per Term Year, to assist the Lord Mayor (or their delegate) in conducting their civic duties, and attendance at community functions.
- 6.47 Council will not meet or reimburse to a Councillor the costs associated with attendance at any political fundraising event, any donation to a political party or candidate's electoral fund, or for any other private benefit.
- 6.48 Council will not meet or reimburse to a Councillor any component of a ticket that is

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additional to the service cost, such as a donation to a political party or candidate's electoral fund, or for any other private benefit.

- 6.49 Council will meet the related costs for Councillors for attending events such as memorials or services, where there is an option to lay a tribute, such as a floral wreath or book on behalf of Council.

### **Accompanying Person expenses**

- 6.50 Council will meet certain expenses incurred by a Councillor on behalf of an Accompanying Person, that are properly and directly related to the civic duties of the Councillor, as indicated below:

6.50.1 For the LGNSW Annual Conference, Council will meet the costs of an Accompanying Person of a Councillor, to attend the official opening reception and conference dinner.

6.53.2 Council will meet or reimburse the cost of the ticket for an Accompanying Person of a Councillor, to attend a permissible non-Council function or event, within the approved expenditure limits established under clauses 6.44 to 6.50.

### **ICT expenses**

- 6.51 Information and Communication Technology (ICT), equipment and services issued or provided for under this Policy, may only be utilised by Councillors to undertake their civic duties, in accordance with any ICT directives, and the confidentiality provisions as outlined in Council's Code of Conduct.
- 6.52 Approval to incur ICT expenses, or for the reimbursement of such expenses, must be obtained using the prescribed form, before the expense is incurred.
- 6.53 Where a Councillor has reached the expense limits set out in this Policy, but through instances of theft, damage, or other reasonable cause, is unable to continue use of their existing devices, Council will ensure access to appropriate devices, to enable the Councillor to carry out their civic duties, as determined by the CEO.

### **Mobile computing and multi-function device**

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- 6.54 Council will provide or reimburse Councillors a limit of \$5,000 per Councillor, per term for computing equipment costs for:
- (a) one appropriate tablet and/or mobile computing device (e.g. laptop);
  - (b) one multifunction device for scanning or printing;
  - (c) related accessories; and
  - (d) the reasonable repair, maintenance, and/or replacement of those items.
- 6.55 Council will supply a standard kit to Councillors upon request, within the maximum limit set out in clause 6.54. The standard kit will contain a tablet and/or laptop computer with software, sim card, and multifunction printer/scanner device. Council Staff will provide technical support for items from the standard kit. Council may vary the standard equipment, from time to time, in accordance with technology changes.
- 6.56 Alternatively, if Councillors choose to select and purchase their own device, Councillors will be responsible for costs in excess of the maximum amount specified in clause 6.54. The maximum amount specified in clause 6.54 is to be reduced by the value of any equipment that the Council has supplied, during the specified period. If Councillors choose to select and purchase their own device, they do so with the understanding that Council Staff will not service or provide technical support for that device.
- 6.57 Any requests for non-standard ICT equipment or software must be made, in writing, to the CEO.
- 6.58 All items provided by Council or for which Council has paid via reimbursement, will be Council's property.

### **Mobile phone and related equipment**

- 6.59 Council will provide or reimburse Councillors a limit of \$3,000 per Councillor, per term, for mobile phone equipment costs for:
- (a) one mobile phone;
  - (b) related accessories; and
  - (c) the reasonable repair, maintenance, and/or replacement of those items.

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- 6.60 Council will supply a standard kit to Councillors upon request, to be included in the above-mentioned maximum amount. The standard kit contains an iPhone or Samsung mobile phone and accessories. Council Staff will provide technical support for items from the standard kit. Council may vary the standard equipment, from time to time, in accordance with technology changes.
- 6.61 Alternatively, if Councillors choose to select and purchase their own device, Councillors will be responsible for costs in excess of the maximum amount specified in clause 6.59. The maximum amount specified in clause 6.59 is to be reduced by the value of any equipment that the Council has supplied, during the specified period. If Councillors choose to select and purchase their own device, they do so with the understanding that Council Staff will not service or provide technical support for that device.
- 6.62 All items provided by Council or for which Council has paid via reimbursement, will be Council's property.
- 6.63 Councillors may seek reimbursement for the cost of applications on their mobile electronic communication device, that are directly related to their duties as a Councillor, within the maximum limit specified in clause 6.59.

### **Mobile phone service and internet**

- 6.64 Council will arrange and pay for a mobile phone plan for each Councillor upon request, including communications and data package, for Council business up to a value of \$80 per Councillor, per month.
- 6.65 Where a Councillor provides their own mobile phone plan, Council will reimburse the Councillor for business related usage (including data and Council business calls), within the monthly limit outlined in clause 6.64.
- 6.66 Councillors will be responsible for any excess usage costs above the maximum amount set out under clause 6.64. Excess costs incurred will be handled in accordance with clauses 10.17 to 10.20.
- 6.67 Where Councillors use a home internet connection, Council will reimburse up to 50% of their monthly access fees, to a limit of \$50 per month.

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### Carer and special requirement expenses

- 6.68 Council will seek to ensure Council premises and associated facilities are accessible, including provision for sight or hearing-impaired Councillors and those with other disabilities.
- 6.69 Transportation provisions as outlined in this Policy, such as access to a Cabcharge Account, will also assist Councillors who may be unable or unwilling to drive a vehicle.
- 6.70 The CEO may authorise the provision of reasonable additional facilities and expenses, in order to enable a Councillor with a disability to perform their civic duties.
- 6.71 Councillors who are the carer of a child or other elderly, disabled and/or sick immediate family member, will be entitled to reimbursement of carer expenses up to a maximum of \$4,000 per Councillor, per Term Year, for attendance at Official Business, plus reasonable travel time and costs from the Councillor's principal place of residence, if required.
- 6.72 Childcare expenses may be claimed for children up to and including the age of 16 years, where the carer is not a relative.
- 6.73 In the event of caring for a person over 16 years of age, Councillors will need to provide suitable evidence to the CEO that they are the principal carer, in order for the CEO to approve such reimbursement. This may take the form of advice from a medical practitioner.

### Home office expenses

- 6.74 Each Councillor may be reimbursed up to \$500 in the first year of a new Council Term and \$300 per each subsequent Term Year, for costs associated with the maintenance of a home office, such as printer paper, envelopes, and other minor items of consumable stationery.
- 6.75 Each Councillor may be issued or reimbursed up to \$750 per Term Year, for costs associated with printer ink cartridges used at a home office.

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6.75.1 Where Councillors seek reimbursement or provision of new printer ink cartridges, used cartridges should be returned to Council.

## Insurance

6.76 Councillors are to receive the benefit of insurance cover while engaging in any activity directly or indirectly connected with or on behalf of Council, including while travelling to and/or from such activity, as follows:

### 6.76.1 Personal Injury

Whilst ever on Council authorised business, worldwide, covering bodily injury caused by accidental, violent, external, and visible means, up to a sublimit for death and capital limits of \$350,000. Also covering permanent disablement, temporary total disablement, temporary partial disablement, bed care benefit, and non-medical expenses. For the avoidance of doubt, the cover does not include medical expenses, and cover is subject to any limitation or condition set out in the policy of insurance that is taken out, at Council's direction, current at the time of occurrence of the injury.

### 6.76.2 Professional Indemnity

For matters arising out of Councillors' performance of civic duties or exercise of their functions as Councillors, provided the performance or exercise of the relevant civic duty or function is, in Council's opinion, bona fide and/or proper, and carried out in good faith, as required under section 731 of the LG Act; subject to any limitation or condition set out in the policy of insurance that is taken out, at Council's direction.

### 6.76.3 Public Liability

For matters arising out of Councillors' performance of civic duties or exercise of their functions as Councillors, carried out in good faith, subject to any limitation or condition set out in the policy of insurance that is taken out, at Council's direction.

### 6.76.4 Travel Insurance

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Appropriate travel insurances will be provided for any Councillors traveling on approved overseas and interstate travel on Council business, subject to any limitation or condition set out in the policy of insurance that is taken out, at Council's direction.

## 7. Legal assistance

- 7.1 Council may, if requested, indemnify and/or reimburse the reasonable legal expenses of:
- (a) a Councillor, or former Councillor, defending an action arising from the performance in good faith of a function under the LG Act, provided that the outcome of the legal proceedings is favourable to the Councillor, or former Councillor;
  - (b) a Councillor, or former Councillor, defending an action in defamation, provided the statements complained of were made in good faith in the course of exercising a function under the LG Act, in a Council meeting or on Council related business (e.g. on-site meetings); Council is satisfied that such statements complained of occurred during the bona fide consideration of Council business, in good faith, and without malice; and the outcome of the legal proceedings is favourable to the Councillor, or former Councillor; or
  - (c) a Councillor, or former Councillor, for proceedings before an appropriate investigative or review body, provided the subject of the proceedings arises from the performance in good faith of a function under the LG Act; the matter has proceeded past any initial assessment phase to a formal investigation or review; and the investigative or review body makes a finding substantially favourable to the Councillor, or former Councillor.
- 7.2 For the purposes of this clause 7, a former Councillor will only be indemnified or reimbursed for reasonable legal expenses, in the circumstances specified in clause 7.1, where the former Councillor was still a Councillor at the time the conduct, the subject of a legal action or proceedings, occurred.
- 7.3 In the case of a Code of Conduct complaint made against a Councillor, legal costs will only be made available where the matter has been referred by the CEO to a conduct reviewer, and the conduct reviewer has commenced a formal investigation of the matter and makes a finding substantially favourable to the Councillor, including where an investigation is withdrawn or closed, without an adverse finding.

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7.3.1 The CEO may approve the indemnification and/or reimbursement of legal costs under clause 7.3 up to a maximum amount of \$3,000 per complaint, in consultation with the Lord Mayor when appropriate.

7.3.2 Indemnification and/or reimbursement of legal costs under clause 7.3 does not require Council approval.

7.3 Legal expenses incurred in relation to proceedings arising out of the performance by a Councillor of their functions under the LG Act are distinguished from expenses incurred in relation to proceedings arising merely from something that a Councillor has done, during their term in office. For example, expenses arising from an investigation as to whether a Councillor acted corruptly would not be covered by this section, and Council would not indemnify or reimburse a Councillor for such legal expenses.

7.4 Council will also not cover the legal costs:

- (a) of legal proceedings initiated by a Councillor under any circumstances (including but not limited to any action by one Councillor against another Councillor);
- (b) of a Councillor seeking advice in respect of initiating possible defamation, or in seeking a non-litigious remedy for possible defamation; or
- (c) for legal proceedings that do not involve a Councillor performing their civic duties as a Councillor.

7.5 Indemnification and/or reimbursement of reasonable legal expenses must be approved by Council resolution, prior to costs being incurred. Any indemnification and/or reimbursement of a Councillor's, or former Councillor's, reasonable legal costs by Council are also subject to:

- (a) the amount of such indemnification and/or reimbursement being reduced by the amount of any monies that may be or are otherwise recouped by the Councillor, or former Councillor, on any basis;
- (b) the amount of such indemnification and/or reimbursement of a Councillor's or former Councillor's solicitor's fees being limited to a rate equivalent to the average hourly rate being charged by Council's legal services panel, at the time the solicitor's fees were incurred (i.e., any portion of the solicitor's fees

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- representing an hourly charge rate higher than Council's legal services panel's average hourly charge rate, will not be reimbursed). Where a Councillor or former Councillor engages a barrister (**Counsel**), the indemnification and/or reimbursement of Counsel fees is to be submitted to Council, for approval; and
- (c) any indemnification and/or reimbursement not including any damages awarded to, or made against, the Councillor or former Councillor.

## PART C – FACILITIES

### 8. General facilities for all Councillors

#### Facilities

8.1 Council will provide the following facilities to Councillors to assist them to carry out their civic duties:

- (a) A Councillors' common area, appropriately furnished to include photocopier, printer, desks, computer terminals, pigeonholes, lockable cupboards, and appropriate refreshments.
- (b) Access to shared private workspaces/offices, equipped with a computer monitor and desk.
- (c) Access to shared car parking spaces, while attending Council offices on Official Business.
- (d) A name badge, which may be worn at official functions, indicating the individual's elected office.
- (e) A corporate uniform, on request, which may be worn at official functions and when carrying out their civic duties. This corporate uniform will be of a standard determined by the CEO, consisting of:
- i. a blazer embroidered with the Council crest: One blazer per Councillor, per Term. Where a Councillor chooses to provide their own blazer, Council will reimburse the cost of embroidery of the Council crest up to the value of \$50, per Councillor, per Term;
  - ii. a necktie/scarf: Up to two neckties and/or scarves embroidered with the Council crest, per Councillor, per Term;
  - iii. a hat embroidered with the Council crest: One hat per Councillor, per Term;
  - iv. business shirts embroidered with the Council crest: Up to two business shirts per Councillor, per Term;
  - v. polo shirts embroidered with the Council crest: Up to two polo shirts per Councillor, per Term;

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- vi. an all-weather coat embroidered with the Council crest: One coat per Councillor, per Term; and
  - vii. an umbrella emblazoned with the Council crest: One umbrella per Councillor, per Term.
- (f) Access to a digital subscription to appropriate newspapers, as determined by the CEO.
- (g) Two standard Council branded 'Meet Your Councillor' corflutes, per Councillor, per Term. Damaged corflutes should be returned to Council and will be replaced on request.
- 8.2 Councillors may book meeting rooms for Official Business in Council's Administration Building, at no cost, to allow Councillors to meet with constituents and other people about issues of importance or concern, and for administrative purposes to fulfil their civic duties. Requests for room bookings should be made in writing to the Executive Support Unit.
- 8.3 Requests to book meeting rooms at other Council facilities (e.g. community centres and libraries), must be made in writing to the Executive Support Unit, and require the approval of the CEO or their delegate. Councillors must not approach venue Staff directly, regarding booking requests.
- 8.4 Costs for catering, audio visual equipment, or other meeting requirements will be the responsibility of the relevant Councillor.
- 8.5 Council will provide Councillors with access to Council's Employee Assistance Program.
- 8.6 Council will provide Councillors with access to Council's Health and Wellbeing Program, including access to Council's flu vaccination, skin, and health checks programs.
- 8.7 Council will provide Councillors with tickets to events or functions organised or presented by Council, as determined by the CEO, and in accordance with the gifts, benefits, and hospitality provisions outlined in Council's Code of Conduct. This includes:
- (a) events where Council has provided sponsorship or partnership (where tickets are made available to Council as part of the agreement);

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- (b) events that are part of Council's major and civic events program (e.g. Australia Day, Parramatta Lanes, and New Year's Eve); and
- (c) shows presented at the Riverside Theatres.

8.7.1 Tickets provided by Council under this Policy are non-transferrable. All exceptions will require the CEO's written approval.

8.8 Any facilities provided under this Policy will be of a standard determined by the CEO, in consultation with the Lord Mayor when appropriate, and as appropriate for the purpose.

### Stationery

8.9 Council will provide the following stationery to Councillors per Term Year:

- (a) electronic standard Councillor letterhead and, upon request, up to 1,000 pages of hard copy letterhead, per Councillor, to be used only for correspondence associated with civic duties;
- (b) up to 1,000 standard Council branded business cards per Councillor; and
- (c) minor items of consumable stationery (e.g. pens, pencils, and paper clips).

8.10 Council will cover the cost of postage for Councillor correspondence issued for official and civic duties, up to a maximum of \$1,000 per Councillor, per Term Year. Councillors are to provide all outgoing mail to the Executive Support Unit for distribution, which will be sent as standard priority post and appropriate records kept. Councillors will not be directly issued postage stamps.

8.11 Councillors may also be supplied with up to 400 Christmas or festive cards per Term Year, including envelopes of the standard size. Councillor Christmas or festive cards will also be made available in electronic format, up to a value equal to the paper-based card cost, which Councillors are encouraged to use.

8.11.1 Where Councillors choose a paper-based card format, the postage of cards will be counted towards the limit set out in clause 8.10.

8.12 In the event a new Lord Mayor or Deputy Lord Mayor is elected, both the incoming and outgoing Lord Mayor or Deputy Lord Mayor shall be entitled to a new standard letterhead and business cards.

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## Administrative support

- 8.13 Council will provide administrative support to Councillors, to assist them with their civic duties only. Administrative support may be provided by Staff in the Executive Support Unit or by a member of Council’s administrative Staff, as arranged by the CEO or their delegate. Staffing numbers will be determined in accordance with practices followed at Council to establish appropriate workforce staffing levels taking into account required work activities and is subject to periodical review. As per the LG Act, Councillors are not to be involved in matters involving the appointment and management of personnel.
- 8.14 As per Section 4 of this Policy, Council Staff are to assist Councillors with undertaking their civic duties only, and are not to assist Councillors with matters of personal or political interest, including campaigning.

## 9. Additional facilities for the Lord Mayor

- 9.1 In addition to the corporate uniform outlined in clause 8.1.(e), the Lord Mayor may be provided with one additional blazer and two additional shirts per Lord Mayoral Term.
- 9.2 In addition to the stationary outlined in clauses 8.9 to 8.11, the Lord Mayor may be provided with an additional 1,000 business cards and an additional 400 Christmas or festive cards per Term Year.
- 9.1.1 Where the Lord Mayor chooses a paper-based card format, the postage of cards will be in accordance with clauses 8.10 to 8.11.
- 9.3 Council will provide the Lord Mayor with a maintained motor vehicle to a similar standard of other Council vehicles provided for under Council’s Fleet Management Policy, and with a fuel card and toll road tag. The vehicle will be supplied for use in attending Official Business, Professional Development, or attendance at the Lord Mayor’s office.
- 9.4 A parking space at Council’s offices will be reserved for the Lord Mayor’s Council-issued vehicle, for use on Official Business, Professional Development, or attendance at the Lord Mayor’s office.

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- 9.5 Council will provide the Lord Mayor with a furnished office, incorporating a computer configured to Council's standard operating environment, as well as a telephone and meeting space.
- 9.6 Council will provide the Lord Mayor or their delegate with gifts of token value for presentation to people who have made significant contributions to the community, or dignitaries or guests who visit the area, in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct.
- 9.7 To perform their civic duties, the Lord Mayor will be assisted by a number of Staff providing administrative, secretarial, and policy support. The number of Staff supporting the Lord Mayor will be determined by the CEO, in consultation with the Lord Mayor. Staffing numbers will be determined in accordance with practices followed at Council to establish appropriate workforce staffing levels taking into account required work activities and is subject to periodical review. As per the LG Act, Councillors are not be involved in matters involving the appointment and management of personnel.
- 9.8 Council will provide for the reasonable cost of postage of correspondence forwarded by the Lord Mayor, in the conduct of Official Business.
- 9.9 As per Section 4 of this Policy, Staff are to assist the Lord Mayor with Official Business only, and are not to assist with matters of personal or political interest, including campaigning.

## **PART D – PROCEDURES**

### **10. Approval, payment, and reimbursement arrangements**

- 10.1 Expenses must only be incurred by Councillors in accordance with the provisions of this Policy.
- 10.2 In the final Term Year of a Council Term, expenditure caps will be calculated on a pro-rata basis if required.
- 10.3 Councillors filling a casual vacancy will have their Term Year expenditure caps calculated on a pro-rata basis.
- 10.4 Where a Lord Mayor is elected outside of the standard Lord Mayoral Term cycle

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expenditure caps will be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

- 10.5 Approval for incurring expenses, or for the reimbursement of such expenses, should be obtained before the expense is incurred, using the prescribed form as advised by the Executive Support Unit.
- 10.6 Up to the maximum limits specified in this Policy, approval for the following may be sought after the expense is incurred:
- (a) local travel relating to the conduct of Official Business;
  - (b) emergency carer costs associated with the need to attend to Official Business; or
  - (c) ICT expenditure of an ongoing nature, such as mobile phone plan or home internet costs, as per clauses 6.64 to 6.67.
- 10.7 Approval for payments made under this Policy will be granted at the determination of the CEO.
- 10.8 Council staff assessing payments are required to ensure sufficient information is provided to ensure expenses are within the scope of this Policy and may be required to seek additional information or explanation from Councillors.

### Direct payment

- 10.9 Council may approve and directly pay expenses. Requests for direct payment must be submitted to the CEO for consideration against this Policy, using the prescribed process as advised by the Executive Support Unit, with sufficient information and time to allow for the claim to be assessed and processed.

### Reimbursement

- 10.10 All claims for reimbursement of expenses incurred must be made on the prescribed forms as advised by the Executive Support Unit, supported by appropriate receipts and/or tax invoices, and submitted to the CEO for approval.
- 10.11 Unless otherwise specified in this Policy, Councillors must submit all claims for reimbursement within three months of an expense being incurred. Claims made after this time can only be approved by the CEO.

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10.12 On cessation or expiration of a Councillor's term of office, all outstanding claims for reimbursement must be lodged to Council no later than 14 days from the date of cessation or expiration of a Councillor's term of office, or such other period as may be specified by the CEO, using the prescribed form as advised by the Executive Support Unit.

### **Advance payment**

10.13 Council may pay a cash advance for Councillors attending approved conferences, seminars, or Professional Development engagements.

10.14 The maximum value of a cash advance is \$150 per day of the conference, seminar, or Professional Development engagement, to a maximum of \$500.

10.15 Requests for advance payment must be submitted to the CEO for assessment against this Policy, using the prescribed form as advised by the Executive Support Unit, with sufficient information and time to allow for the claim to be assessed and processed.

10.16 Councillors must fully reconcile all expenses against the cost of the advance within one month of incurring the cost and/or returning home from approved travel. This includes providing to Council:

- (a) a full reconciliation of all expenses, including appropriate receipts and/or tax invoices; and
- (b) reimbursement of any amount of the advance payment not spent in attending the Official Business or Professional Development engagement.

### **Notification**

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

### **Reimbursement to Council**

10.17 In accordance with Council's Code of Conduct, Councillors must use Council

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resources ethically, effectively, efficiently, and carefully, in the course of public duties.

10.18 If a Councillor, or Council on behalf of a Councillor, has incurred an expense that exceeds a maximum limit, exceeds reasonable incidental private use, or is not provided for in this Policy:

- (a) Council will invoice the Councillor for the expense; and
- (b) the Councillor will be required to reimburse Council for that expense, within 28 days of the invoice date.

10.19 If the Councillor cannot reimburse Council within 28 days of the invoice date, they are to submit a written explanation to the CEO, for consideration. The CEO may elect to deduct the amount out of the Councillor's fees.

10.20 Council's Executive Support Unit will provide Councillors with regular updates on expenditure and provide additional notifications when approaching maximum limits.

## 11. Disputes

11.1 If a Councillor disputes a determination made under this Policy, the Councillor should discuss the matter with the CEO.

11.2 If the Councillor and the CEO cannot resolve the dispute, the Councillor may submit a notice of motion to Council, seeking to have the dispute resolved.

## 12. Return or retention of equipment and facilities

12.1 All equipment and facilities provided under this Policy will remain Council's property. On cessation or expiration of a Councillor's term of office, use of all equipment and facilities must cease immediately. On request, equipment and facilities must be returned to Council no later than 14 days from the date of cessation or expiration of a Councillor's term of office, or such other period as specified by the CEO.

12.2 Should a Councillor desire to keep any equipment allocated by Council, the Councillor may make an application to the CEO to purchase any such equipment. The CEO will determine an agreed fair market price for the item of equipment, including on a pro-rata basis where a Councillor has contributed personally to the purchase of the equipment.

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12.3 Where a Councillor has opted to retain ICT equipment allocated by Council under clause 12.2, the Councillor will be required to provide the device to Council's ICT department for the removal of Council systems, software, and information.

12.4 Councillors will have the opportunity to have any mobile number assigned to them as a Councillor transferred into their ownership, upon ceasing to hold office.

12.5 The prices for all equipment purchased by Councillors under clause 12.2 will be recorded in Council's annual report.

### **13. Reporting**

13.1 Council will report on the provision of expenses and facilities to councillors as required in Parts 3 and 4 of Chapter 13 of the LG Act and Parts 8A and 9 of the LG Regulation.

13.2 In addition to these statutory reporting requirements, Council will report the total cost of expenses and the provision of facilities for the Lord Mayor and Councillors, by way of Council's integrated planning and reporting program, and quarterly financial performance reporting.

### **14. Auditing**

14.1 The operation of this Policy, including claims made under this Policy, will be included in Council's audit program and an audit will be undertaken annually.

### **15. Breaches**

15.1 Suspected breaches of this Policy are to be reported to the CEO.

15.2 Alleged breaches of this Policy shall be dealt with by following the processes set out in Council's Code of Conduct.

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## Definitions

Accompanying Person	Refers to a spouse, partner, de facto partner, or other person who has a close personal relationship with or provides carer support to a Councillor.
Administration Building	Refers to Council's administration building at 126 Church Street, Parramatta.
Annual Conference	Means the Local Government NSW Annual Conference.
Cabcharge Account	Refers to an account providing a means of payment for the use of taxis as a mode of transport for official Council business, without requiring personal payment means.
Councillor	A person elected or appointed to civic office as a member of the governing body of Council, including the Lord Mayor.
Lord Mayoral Term	Means the two-year period that a Councillor holds the office of Lord Mayor, commencing on the day the person is declared to be so elected, and becomes vacant when the person's successor is declared to be elected to the office, or on the occurrence of a casual vacancy in the office.
Official Business	Refers to functions that the Lord Mayor or Councillors are required or invited to attend, to fulfil their legislated role and responsibilities for Council, or result in a direct benefit for Council and/or for the local government area. This includes but is not limited to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. meetings of Council and committees of the whole;</li> <li>2. meetings of committees facilitated by Council</li> <li>3. meetings, functions, workshops, and other events to which attendance by a Councillor has been requested or approved by Council; and</li> <li>4. any activity in the service of the Council approved by the CEO, in consultation with the Lord Mayor.</li> </ol>
Professional Development	Refers to a seminar, conference, training course, or other development opportunity relevant to the civic duties of a Councillor or the Lord Mayor.
Staff	A person who is directly employed by Council on a full time, part time, temporary, or casual basis.
Term	Means the four-year period that a Councillor holds office,

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	commencing on the day the person is declared to be so elected, and becomes vacant on the day appointed for the next ordinary election of councillors, or on the occurrence of a casual vacancy in the office.
Term Year	Means the 12-month period commencing from the date or anniversary of the declaration of the local government election results.

<b>REFERENCES</b>	<i>Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009 (NSW)</i> <i>Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)</i> <i>Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (NSW)</i> <i>Office of Local Government, Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision for facilities for Mayors and Councillors in NSW (October 2009)</i>
<b>ASSOCIATED POLICIES</b>	Code of Conduct Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy Fleet Management Policy
<b>ATTACHMENTS</b>	Nil

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