



ESC – S001 – Councillors Reimbursement of Expenses and Provision of Facilities Policy

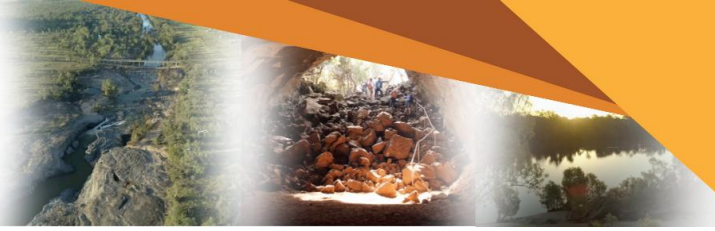
POLICY VERSION AND REVISION

Version History		Meeting date
Post-Election Meeting – Dated 11 th April 2016		15 th April 2026
General Meeting – Dated 15 th January 2017		
General Meeting – Dated 15 th January 2018		Resolution number
General Meeting – Dated 23 rd January 2019		# 26.04.10
General Meeting – Dated 24 th January 2024		
General Meeting – Dated 19 th June 2024		
Approval by CEO		
Effective date	Review date	
15 th April 2026	1 st July 2027	
Policy Owner		
Chief Executive Officer		
Current incumbent		
Ken Timms		
Implementation Officer		
Chief Executive Officer		
Current incumbent	Contact number	Official file no.
Ken Timms PSM	4079 9090	ESC – S001



Contents

1.	Purpose	3
2.	Scope.....	3
3.	Policy Statement.....	3
3.1.	General Principles	3
3.2.	Expense Categories	4
	Professional Development	4
	Discretionary Professional Development	4
	Travel.....	4
	Private Vehicle Usage	4
	Meals	5
	Incidental Daily Allowance.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Hospitality	5
	Accommodation.....	5
3.3.	Provision of Facilities.....	5
	Secretarial Support.....	5
	Administrative Tools and Office Amenities.....	5
	IT Equipment	5
	Telephone and Data.....	6
	Maintenance Costs of Council-Owned Equipment.....	6
	Uniforms and Safety Equipment.....	6
	Use of Council Vehicles	6
	Insurance.....	6
	Returning of Facilities	6
	Misuse of Council Provided Resources for Electoral Purposes.....	7
3.4.	Claims for reimbursement	7
4.	Reporting	7
5.	Definitions	7
6.	Related Legislation, Documents and References	8
7.	Review	8



1. PURPOSE

The Etheridge Shire Council is committed to ensuring that Councillors' are provided with the facilities required to enable them to perform their duties.

Councillors should not be financially disadvantaged when carrying out their roles, and should be fairly and reasonably compensated in accordance with statutory requirements and community expectations.

The Councillors' Reimbursement of Expenses and Provision of Facilities Policy is a statutory policy¹ ensuring accountability and transparency in the reimbursement of expenses incurred by councillors and ensures that councillors are provided with reasonable facilities to assist them in carrying out their civic duties.

2. SCOPE

Chapter 8 Part 1 Division 2 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* states that an Expenses Reimbursement Policy is a policy providing for the following² —

- a) Payment of reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by councillors for discharging their duties and responsibilities as councillors;
- b) Provision of facilities to the councillors for that purpose.

This policy applies to all councillors of Etheridge Shire Council for the reimbursement of expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by them in undertaking their responsibilities.

Council will reimburse councillors for eligible expenses set out in this policy. Any expenses not provided for by this policy will not be reimbursed without approval from the Chief Executive Officer.

Councillor Remuneration is not covered by this policy. Councillor remuneration is determined annually by the Local Government Remuneration and Disciplinary Tribunal.

Spouses, partners and family members of councillors, and/or accompanying persons, are not entitled to reimbursement of expenses or have access to facilities allocated to councillors.

Failure to comply with this policy, falsifying claims or the misuse of facilities may breach the Councillors' Code of Conduct and/or represent an offence under the Criminal Code and may be referred to the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

This policy ensures that the Council's reimbursement of expenses incurred by Councillors is consistent with the local government principles and financial sustainability criteria as defined in the Local Government Act 2009³.

In addition, the principles that underpin this policy are:

- Councillors should not receive a private benefit through their role as a councillor;
- The use of public monies in the public interest by responsible budgeting and accounting;
- Fair and reasonable allocation of council resources (allowances, facilities and other benefits) to enable all councillors to conduct the duties of their office;
- Transparent decision-making by public disclosure of policy and resolutions; and
- Accountability for expenditure and use of facilities through full justification and acquittal.

Expenses will be paid to a councillor through administrative processes approved by Etheridge Shire Council's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) subject to the limits outlined in this policy, or council endorsement by resolution.

¹ Local Government Regulation 2012 (Qld). S250a

² Local Government Regulation 2012 (Qld). S249

³ Local Government Act 2009 (Qld). S4



3.2. EXPENSE CATEGORIES

Professional Development

Council will reimburse expenses incurred for mandatory professional development and/or discretionary professional development deemed essential for the Councillors' role. The Mayor attends the Local Government Association Queensland (LGAQ), Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) and any other relevant conferences/seminars/workshops as the primary delegate (council shall appoint the other delegates). Councillors can attend workshops, courses, seminars and conferences that are related to the role of a councillor. Approval to attend is made by council resolution and therefore councillors should advise the CEO of their desire to attend an event. The CEO will provide a report to council seeking approval on behalf of the councillor.

Discretionary Professional Development

Each councillor can attend (at their own discretion) workshops, courses, seminars and conferences that improve the skills relevant to their role. This training is initially limited to \$5000 per councillor over the current term of office, but will be reviewed annually when setting the budget. There is no requirement for a council resolution to approve these attendances, however, the councillor would need to submit a request to the CEO (prior to attendance) and provide all relevant documentation within 14 days of attending the event to ensure their expenses are reimbursed.

Travel

Council will reimburse local, interstate and, in some cases, intrastate and overseas travel expenses (such as flights, motor vehicle, accommodation, meals and associated registration fees) deemed necessary to achieve the business of council where a councillor is an official representative of council and the activity/event and travel has been endorsed by resolution of council.

Council will pay for reasonable expenses incurred for overnight accommodation when a councillor is required to stay outside or in some cases within the Etheridge Shire, where a councillor is an official representative of council and the activity/event and travel has been endorsed by resolution of council. All councillor travel approved by council will be booked and paid for by council. This includes transfers to and from airports (e.g. taxis, trains and buses).

Councillors will be reimbursed for parking costs that they have incurred while attending to official council business (e.g. secured vehicle parking at the airport), upon presentation of a receipt/tax invoice.

Where the councillor has an accompanying person, all expenses will be at the expense of the Councillor. If council has incurred a charge, the Councillor must reimburse Council within seven days. There are exceptions where the councillor would have incurred the expense in performing their official council business (e.g. accommodation, taxi, vehicle hire).

Private Vehicle Usage

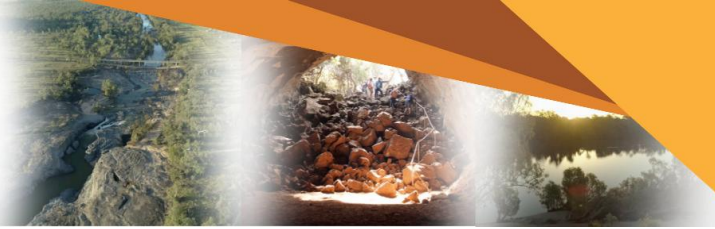
Councillors' private vehicle usage will be reimbursed if the usage is for official council business. This includes travel to and from councillors' principal place of residence to:

- attend official council business/meetings/functions/community events and public meetings in the role of councillor;
- investigate issues/complaints regarding council services raised by residents/rate payers and visitors to the region.

Councillors making a claim for reimbursement of private vehicle usage can do so by submitting the appropriate form detailing the relevant travel based on log book details. The amount reimbursed will be based on the published Australian Tax Office business-use-of-motor vehicle-cents-per-kilometre method and kilometre rate applicable at the time of travel.

The Commissioner of Australian Taxation Office determines claimable cents per kilometre rates in each income year. The amount reimbursed will be based on the published Australian Taxation Office (ATO) business use of motor vehicle cents per kilometre method and kilometre rate applicable at the time of travel.

The official ATO site that provides the up to date rates can be located here - [Cents per kilometre method | Australian Taxation Office](#)



Meals

Council will reimburse reasonable costs of meals for a councillor when the councillor has incurred the cost personally and the meal was not provided within the registration cost of the approved activity/event, upon production of a valid tax invoice. If a councillor elects not to produce tax invoices and seek reimbursement for meals while attending official council business, he/she may claim a meal allowance where the meal was not provided within the registration costs of the approved activity/event. Expenses relating to the consumption of alcohol will not be reimbursed.

If a Mayor or Councillor is unable to submit a receipt or tax invoice and seeks reimbursement for meals, she/he shall be reimbursed in accordance with the ATO's [Reasonable Travel Allowances on the submission of a Statutory Declaration](#).

Should the councillor choose not to attend a provided dinner/meal, then the full cost of the alternative meal shall be met by the councillor.

Hospitality

Councillors may have occasion to incur hospitality expenses while conducting council business apart from civic receptions organised by council. The Mayor may particularly require additional reimbursement when entertaining dignitaries outside of official events.

To allow for this expense, the following amounts can be claimed: \$500 per annum for councillors and up to \$5,000 per annum for the Mayor.

Accommodation

Councillors may need to stay away from home overnight while attending to council business. When attending conferences, councillors should take advantage of the package provided by conference organisers (if applicable) and therefore stay in the recommended accommodation unless prior approval has been granted by the CEO. All councillor accommodation for council business will be booked and paid for by council. Suitable accommodation will be sought within a reasonable distance to the venue that the councillor is to attend. Should more than one councillor attend the same event, council will book and pay for a separate room for each attending councillor.

3.3. PROVISION OF FACILITIES

Council will provide facilities for the use of councillors in the conduct of their respective roles with council. All facilities provided remain the property of council and must be returned when the councillor's term expires.

The facilities provided by council to councillors are to be used only for council business unless prior approval has been granted by resolution of council.

Secretarial Support

The Mayor's office will be assisted with secretarial support by Council's executive assistant.

Secretarial support will be provided to Councillors with prior approval by the Chief Executive Officer.

Administrative Tools and Office Amenities

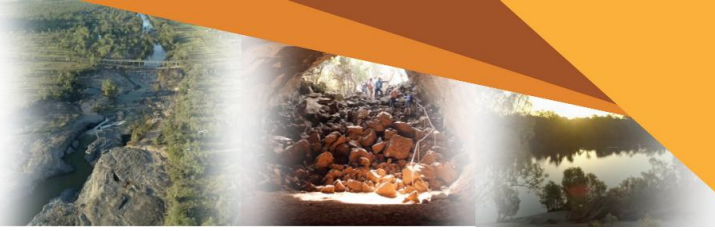
Councillors are entitled to use Council facilities as required to assist in discharging their duties and responsibilities including (but not limited to):

- Shared office space and meeting rooms;
- Shared access to landlines, internet, photocopiers, fax, scanner, printers and shredders;
- Stationary;
- Promotional material necessary for official Council business;
- Other resources as approved by the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer.

IT Equipment

Councillors will be provided with the following IT equipment to assist in discharging their duties and responsibilities:

- laptop computer and/or tablet device and necessary software



Council will provide all software necessary to enable Councillor's to carry out their duties as elected members. All software is licensed to the Etheridge Shire Council and remains the property of Council at the end of term. All software licensed to Council that has been installed on a councillor's tablet device will be removed prior to the end of the Councillor's term.

Telephone and Data

Councillors will be provided with the following:

- mobile phone (where a mobile phone is provided by council, all costs attributed to council-business use shall be paid by Council (including total plan costs).

Maintenance Costs of Council-Owned Equipment

Council is responsible for the ongoing maintenance and reasonable wear-and-tear costs of council-owned equipment that is supplied to councillors for official business use. This includes the replacement of any facilities that fall under council's Asset Replacement Program.

Uniforms and Safety Equipment

Council will provide to a councillor:

- Uniform allowance as per staff policy
- Necessary safety equipment for use on official business (e.g. safety helmet, boots and safety glasses).

Use of Council Vehicles

Councillors will have access to a suitable council vehicle for official business. A councillor wishing to use a council vehicle for council business use must submit a request to the CEO at least two days prior, except in exceptional circumstances as determined between the councillor concerned, Mayor and CEO.

The Mayor will be provided with a fully maintained Toyota Prado (or equivalent) including all running costs provided for unlimited and unrestricted use by the Mayor for council business in recognition of the duties required to be performed by the Mayor and the irregular hours required to attend council, community and civic responsibilities. This vehicle is also available for councillor's use while the Mayor is not utilizing the vehicle.

All fuel used in a council-owned vehicle on official council business will be provided or paid for by council.

Insurance

Councillors will be covered under relevant council insurance policies while discharging civic duties. Specifically, insurance cover will be provided for public liability, professional indemnity, Councillors' liability and personal accident. Council will pay the excess for injury claims made by a councillor resulting from the conduct of official council business and on any claim made under insurance cover.

Council will cover costs incurred through injury, investigation, hearings or legal proceedings into the conduct of a councillor, or arising out of (or in connection with) the councillor's performance of his/her civic functions. If it is found the councillor breached the provisions of the Local Government Act 2009 the councillor will reimburse council with all associated costs incurred by council.

Returning of Facilities

It is outlined within this policy that Council will provide reasonable facilities to a Councillor during their term to assist Councillors in carrying out their civic duties.

Councillors are entitled to use these facilities until such time as their term of office comes to an end. If a Councillor is not re-elected the term of office ends when the returning officer declares the result of the election of the council.

However, to ensure that facilities are returned in a reasonable period, and to assist the Chief Executive Officer in the collection of facilities (as stated within this policy), it is required that all Councillors return all facilities to the Chief Executive Officer on or before the Friday preceding the Quadrennial Local Government Elections, or if a Councillor resigns during their term, the facilities are to be returned to the Chief Executive Officer prior to their last day in active office.



Misuse of Council Provided Resources for Electoral Purposes

This policy provides for the following –

- a payment of reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by councillors for discharging their duties and responsibilities as councillors;
- provision of facilities to the councillors for that purpose.

A breach of the reimbursement of expenses and facilities policy is a misuse of information or material acquired in or in connection with the performance of the councillor's responsibilities and would be "misconduct" (as provided in Chapter 6, Part 2, Division 6 of the Local Government Act 2009).

Therefore, elected members should pay particular care in any campaign activity to ensure that there can be no possible perception of use of council provided resources / facilities for activity that could be perceived as having some electoral favour.

3.4. CLAIMS FOR REIMBURSEMENT

All claims for reimbursement of expenses must be made on the approved form and submitted with original receipts to the Chief Executive Officer. Claims certified by a Councillor as complying with this policy will be authorised for payment by the Chief Executive Officer.

Claims must be presented within three months of incurring expenses.

When considering an application for approval of any matter related to this policy, the council or the Chief Executive Officer must have regard to the limits outlined in this policy and any relevant budget allocation.

4. REPORTING

Expenses will be paid to a councillor through administrative processes approved by Etheridge Shire Council's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) subject to the limits outlined in this policy, or council endorsement by resolution.

Pursuant to s186 of the Local Government Regulation 2012, Council's Annual Report must contain the particulars of the expenses incurred by, and the facilities provided to, each Councillor during the financial year under this policy.

5. DEFINITIONS

To assist in interpretation of this policy and associated guidelines, the following definitions shall apply:

Accompanying Person means a spouse, partner or de facto or other person who has a close personal relationship with or provides carer support to a councillor.

Approved Council Business – includes:

- a. Formal meetings of Council, including Ordinary, Statutory and Special Meetings;
- b. Official committee meetings, including advisory committee meetings of which a Councillor is a member;
- c. Formal public consultation meetings;
- d. Civic functions at which a Councillor is attending in his/her official capacity as a Councillor;
- e. Community functions to which a Councillor has been invited in his/her official capacity as a Councillor;
- f. Official inspections;
- g. Formal training, professional development and conferences approved by Council;
- h. Other activities approved by the Mayor and ratified at a subsequent meeting of Council.

Council - means the Etheridge Shire Council.

Councillors - means the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors unless otherwise specified.

Expenses - means costs reasonably incurred, or to be incurred, in connection with Councillors discharging their duties. The expenses may be either reimbursed to Councillors or paid direct by



Council for something that is deemed a necessary cost or charge. Expenses are not included as remuneration.

Entertainment and hospitality - means the cost to council of providing entertainment or hospitality as outlined in council's Entertainment Hospitality Expenditure Policy.

Facilities - mean the facilities deemed necessary to assist Councillors in their role.

Professional development – includes activities undertaken by Councillors to improve their understanding, competence and knowledge of matters that specifically relate to local government functions, or to improve their competence and knowledge of matters that will assist them in carrying out their role as a Councillor. Examples of professional development include (but are not limited to): Local Government industry training, conferences, workshops, seminars or specific events that are relevant to a Councillors role; or that are relevant to the development of a Councillor's individual knowledge and competence in conducting their role.

Reasonable - shall mean Council must make sound judgements and consider what is prudent, responsible and acceptable to the community when determining reasonable levels of facilities and expenditure.

Training – any facilitated learning activity which is considered by council to be a requirement for councillors to discharge their duties and responsibilities as councillors.

6. RELATED LEGISLATION, DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

Local Government Act 2009
Local Government Regulation 2012
Code of Council for Councillors in Queensland
Procurement Policy
Purchase Card Policy
Entertainment Hospitality Policy

7. REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer to monitor the adequacy of this policy and implement and approve appropriate changes. This policy will be formally reviewed every four (4) years or as required by Council.

The adopted policy can be amended, by resolution, at any time and must be able to be inspected and/or purchase by the public at the local government's public office and also published on the local government's website^{4 5}.

⁴ Local Government Regulation (Qld) 2012. S250b

⁵ Local Government Regulation (Qld) 2012. S251