

# Councillor Expense and Reimbursement Policy



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| Policy Number:        | KASC-STAT-033   |
| Responsible Manager:  | Executive Manager Corporate and Financial Services  |
| Legislation:          | Local Government Act 2009<br>Local Government Regulation 2012                                     |
| Associated Documents: | Public Interest Disclosure Policy<br>Councillor Code of Conduct<br>Councillor Remuneration Policy |
| Approval Date:        | 23 August 2022  |

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## 1. Purpose of this Policy

- 1.1. The purpose of the policy is to provide transparency in the reimbursement of expenses for Councillors, and to ensure decision making for reimbursement is in the interest of the community and is fair and ethical.
- 1.2. The policy also supports employees (charged with the role of reimbursing Councillors, or approving expenditure), by providing a clear decision framework in determining acceptable expenditure.

## 2. Scope of Policy

- 2.1. This policy applies to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors of the Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council.

## 3. Statement of Principles

- 3.1. This policy is consistent with the local government principles as set out in the Local Government Act 2009:
  - Transparent and effective processes, and decision making in the public interest;
  - Sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services;
  - Democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement;
  - Good governance of, and by, local government; and
  - Ethical and legal behaviour of Councillors and local government employees.

## 4. Application of this Policy

- 4.1. Representing Council

- 4.1.1. The Mayor and Councillors are at times required to attend meetings, conferences, or other work activity on behalf of Council.
- 4.1.2. The request by the Councillor to attend the event must be made to the CEO five (5) working days prior to the event.
- 4.1.3. The CEO and the Mayor will determine whether the Councillor is required to attend the event
- 4.1.4. The CEO will then determine whether attending is in accordance with the endorsed annual budget.
- 4.1.5. Once approved, the Executive Assistant should work with the Councillor to obtain details on the travel and accommodation required.
- 4.1.6. Council will reimburse expenses, associated with attending the event, in line with Council's Travel and Accommodation Policy.

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## 5. Terms and Definitions

### 5.1. In this policy:

- Council:** Means Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council
- Event:** Is an activity, meeting, or function.
- Personal Matters:** Are matters not related to Council Business.
- Resources:** Include time, influence, or material.

## 6. Acronyms and Abbreviations

### 6.1. In this policy:

- KASC:** Means Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council

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## 7. Mandatory Professional Development

- 7.1. Where Council resolves or the Mayor and CEO consider that all Councillors are to attend training courses or workshops for skills development related to a Councilor's role, and attendance is in accordance with the annual endorsed budget of Council, the Council will reimburse expenses, being the total cost of the course plus associated expenses (in line with Council's Travel and Accommodation Policy).

## 8. Discretionary Professional Development

- 8.1. Where a Councillor identifies a need to attend a conference, workshop, or training to improve skills, the Councillor may make a formal request to the CEO for their approval.
- 8.2. The professional development must be related to the skill development of the Councillor in their capacity as Councillor. The expenses must also be in accordance with the annual endorsed budget of Council,
- 8.3. Council will reimburse expenses to a maximum of \$5,000 for the four-year council term, pro rata.

## 9. Legal Assistance and Associated Costs

## 9.1. Council Related Matters:

- 9.1.1. General legal advice is available to Councillors on Council-related matters. Requests should be provided to the Executive Manager Corporate and Financial Services. Any such expenditure must be in accordance with the annual endorsed budget of Council. In assessing a request, Council may have regard to any insurance benefits that may be available to the Councillor under Council's insurance policies.
- 9.1.2. Where it is found that a Councillor breached the provisions of the Local Government Act or that the conduct the subject of investigation, hearings or legal proceedings was intentional, deliberate, dishonest, fraudulent, criminal, or malicious, the Councillor will reimburse Council for all associated costs incurred by Council.

## 9.2. Personal Matters:

- 9.2.1. Council resources are not available for personal matters. The Chief Executive Officer or Executive Manager Corporate and Financial Services may refer the Mayor or Councillors to other legal entities that maybe able provide assistance.

## 10. Provision of Facilities

### 10.1. Administrative Tools

- 10.1.1. Administrative tools are to be provided to Councillors as required to assist Councillors in their roles as Councillors.
- 10.1.2. Requests for the use of any of the administrative tools as detailed below should be made to the CEO for prior approval and will only be approved if not detrimental to core council business.
- 10.1.3. Administrative tools include:
- Office space and meeting rooms
  - Access to Shared Computers (subject to operational requirements)
  - One mobile phone issued to the Councillor at the start of their term
  - Stationery
  - Access to shared photocopiers
  - Access to shared printers
  - Access to shared facsimile machines
  - Use of Council landline telephones and internet access in Council offices for Council business.
- 10.1.4. Administrative support may also be provided for Mayor and Councillors under a directive given by the Chief Executive Officer to employees concerned. Councillors must not direct an employee for assistance.

### 10.2. Name Badge and Uniform

- 10.2.1. The Council will provide Councillors with a name badge and uniform.

### 10.3. Motor Vehicles

#### 10.3.1. Mayor

- Council will provide a 4WD dual cab utility or similar vehicle on a full private use basis within the Kowanyama community and region, that being, any member of the Councilor's immediate family with a current driver's license can drive this vehicle and transport passengers within the Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council area.
- Council will provide a fuel key/card for reasonable use within the Kowanyama Shire, and account access for fuel outside the Shire.

- Requests for other non-immediate family members to drive the vehicle must be made to the CEO for prior approval.
- Use of the vehicles must be in accordance with Council's Vehicle Use Policy.
- Council will be responsible for the routine maintenance and insurance of the vehicle and all fair wear and tear repairs. Where repairs are required other than as a result of fair wear and tear and are not covered by Council's Motor Vehicle Insurance Policy, the Mayor will pay the full cost (including any freight costs) of rectification or, if the vehicle cannot be repaired, replacement of the vehicle.
- Request for repairs should be provide to the Executive Manager Roads, Infrastructure and Essential Services for approval coordination. A replacement vehicle may not be available. Vehicles required for core council business must be prioritized over Mayoral travel.
- Council will not approve any upgrades to the vehicle or parts of the vehicle unless approved in the annual endorsed budget.
- At the end of the Mayor's term the vehicle shall be returned to Council in the same condition as when the vehicle was provided, subject to fair wear and tear.

#### 10.3.2. Deputy Mayor and Councillors

- Council will provide a 4WD vehicle for council required travel and provide a fuel key/card. The allocated vehicle should not be used for private business and only be used in accordance with Council's Vehicle Use Policy.
- A request to use a vehicle should be made to the Chief Executive Officer for approval, noting the estimated kilometers required, and the route that will be taken.
- On approval the Executive Assistant will review whether a vehicle is available. Vehicles required for core council business must be prioritized over Councillor travel.
- Requests for use of a vehicle should be made at least two days before the required travel.
- Passengers may travel in the vehicle however the route and kilometer usage must not differ from those requested.
- If the estimated kilometer usage is exceeded, the Councillor will be required to pay the differing fuel costs.
- If a vehicle is required for private business, a vehicle may be hired as per council's Vehicle Hire Policy, if a vehicle is available.

#### 10.4. Computers and Telecommunications

- 10.4.1. Council will only provide one mobile phone handset for each term served. At the conclusion of the term these items will become the property of the Councillor.
- 10.4.2. A standard suite of Council software will be provided with each piece of portable IT hardware equipment issued to the Councillor. Any additional software provision and/or installation will be at the discretion of the CEO and must comply with licensing and ICT Standard Operating Environment Procedure.
- 10.4.3. Any lost, damaged, stolen, or superseded devices may be repaired or replaced by Council at the sole discretion of the Chief Executive Officer, who shall consider the reasonableness of the request.
- 10.4.4. All IT provided by Council must comply with all IT Policy and Procedures.
- 10.4.5. A data plan per month will be paid for by Council. Any excessive personal use will be at cost to the Councillor. International calls are barred for this service.

#### 10.5. Insurance Cover

- 10.5.1. Council will indemnify or ensure Councillors in the event of injury sustained while discharging their civic duties. Council will pay the excess for injury claims made by a Councillor resulting from conducting official Council business.

## 11. Travel Expenses

11.1. All Councilor related expenditure should be in accordance with Councils Travel and Accommodation Policy and should be only for Council related business and not personal.

## 12. Policy Review

12.1. The policy is to be reviewed in accordance with the Policy Framework.

12.2. Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council reserves the right to vary, replace, or terminate this policy from time to time.

## 13. Approval

13.1. This policy was duly authorised by Council on 23 August 2022 as Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council's Councillor Expense and Reimbursement Policy and shall hereby supersede any previous policies of the same intent.