



Blackall-Tambo Regional Council

Councillors' Expenses Reimbursement Policy

1. VERSION CONTROL

Version	Reason/Change	Date
1	New policy	9.4.2008
2	Minor changes	29.2.2012
3.0	Minor changes	12.6.2012
3.1	Minor changes and alignment with new corporate template	17.7.2019
4.0	Minor changes	15.6.2022
4.1	Minor changes	20.11.2024
4.2	Minor changes	15.9.2026

2. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulation 2012

Queensland Government Public Sector Domestic Travelling and Relieving Expenses Directive
01/23

Blackall-Tambo Regional Council Entertainment and Hospitality Expenditure Policy

Blackall-Tambo Regional Council Councillor Code of Conduct Policy

Blackall-Tambo Regional Council Vehicle Policy

3. BACKGROUND

This Policy applies to the Mayor and Councillors and is made pursuant to section 250 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* which states:

- (1) A local government must adopt an expenses reimbursement policy.
- (2) A local government may, by resolution, amend its expenses reimbursement policy at any time.

4. PURPOSE

This policy aims to ensure accountability and transparency in the reimbursement of expenses incurred by the Mayor and Councillors.

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5. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Councillors for the reimbursement of expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by them in undertaking their responsibilities. This policy does not provide for salaries or other forms of Councillor Remuneration. Councillor Remuneration limits are determined annually by the Queensland Local Government Remuneration Commission.

6. POLICY STATEMENT

6.1. Council's Position

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.

Councillors should not receive a private benefit through their role as a Councillor and as such this policy provides for actual reimbursement of legitimate expenses and full disclosure through appropriate accountability requirements.

6.2. Reimbursement of Expenses

The Council will reimburse Councillors for expenses as set out in the policy.

Any expenses not provided for in this policy may be reimbursed only with approval from the Chief Executive Officer. When considering an application for approval of any matter related to this policy, the Chief Executive Officer must have regard to any relevant principles as contained in the *Local Government Act 2009* and any applicable budget allocation.

a) Council business

The Council will reimburse expenses incurred in undertaking Council business, which is generally described in Chapter 2, Part 1 of the *Local Government Act 2009*. Council business should result in a benefit being achieved either for the local government and/or the local government area.

For clarity, participating in a community group event or being a representative on a board not associated with Council is not regarded as Council Business. Council business does include, but is not limited to:

- i. Preparing, attending and participating in Council meetings, committee meetings, workshops, strategic briefings, deputations and inspections
- ii. Attending civic functions or civic events to perform official duties or as an official Council representative
- iii. Attending public/community meetings, presentation dinners and annual general meetings as an official Council representative.

b) Professional development

The Council will pay upfront or reimburse expenses for Council approved professional development incurred for:

- i. Mandatory professional development



- ii. Discretionary professional development deemed beneficial (by the Chief Executive Officer or resolution of Council) for a Councillor's role.

c) Travel expenses

The Council will pay upfront or reimburse local, interstate and overseas travel expenses (e.g. flights, car, accommodation, meals) deemed necessary (by the Chief Executive Officer or resolution of Council) for undertaking Council business and approved professional development. Councillors are to travel via the most direct route, using the most economical and efficient mode of transport. The amount of the reimbursement will be the actual amount expended by the Councillor. Any fines incurred while travelling in Council owned vehicles, privately owned vehicles or rental vehicles when attending to Council business will be the responsibility of the Councillor incurring the fine.

d) Flight bookings

All Councillor travel approved by Council will be booked and paid for by Council.

Economy class is to be used where possible although business class may be approved (by the Chief Executive Officer or resolution of Council) in certain circumstances.

Airline tickets are not transferable and can only be procured for the Councillor's travel on Council business. They cannot be used to offset other unapproved expenses (e.g. cost of partner or spouse accompanying the Councillor).

e) Travel transfer costs

Any travel transfer expenses associated with Councillor travelling for approved business will be reimbursed on production of original receipts. Examples include, taxi, bus, ferry, train or uber fares.

f) Private vehicle usage

If a Council vehicle is not available, then a Councillor may use their own vehicle and be reimbursed at the rates determined by the Australian Taxation Office at the time that the expenses are incurred, if the:

- i. Travel is in accordance with this policy; and
- ii. Claim for reimbursement is substantiated with logbook details.

g) Accommodation

All Councillor accommodation for Council business will be booked and paid for by Council. Where accommodation is recommended by conference organisers, Council will take advantage of the package deal that is most economical and convenient to the event.

h) Meals

Councillors will be reimbursed for the actual cost of meals when:

- i. The Councillor incurs the cost personally; and
- ii. The meal was not provided with the registration costs of the approved activity/event/travel; and
- iii. The Councillor can provide original documents sufficient to verify the actual meal cost.

If a Councillor cannot produce a receipt for a meal they have purchased, then a statutory declaration must be completed to claim for the reimbursement.



The actual and reasonable costs allowed for meals are not to exceed the Queensland Government Public Sector Domestic Travelling and Relieving Expenses Directive 01/23 (or as updated), equal to the allowance for an overnight stay in a capital city.

i) Incidental expenses

Up to \$20 per day may be reimbursed to cover the actual costs of any incidentals incurred by Councillors required to travel, and who are away from home overnight for Council business.

j) Car parking amenities

Council will reimburse Councillor parking costs while attending official Council business, upon production of a tax invoice.

6.3. Provision of Facilities

a) Council vehicles

Councillors will have access to a suitable Council vehicle for Council business if required. A Councillor wishing to use a Council vehicle for Council business is to make the booking with the Council officers at least 2 days prior to use, where possible. An induction may be required prior to a Councillor taking a Council vehicle.

A fully maintained Council fleet vehicle is available for use by the Mayor.

All Council vehicles will be operated in accordance with Council's Vehicle Policy.

b) Fuel costs

All fuel used in a Council owned vehicle on Council business will be provided or paid for by Council. Council will reimburse Councillors fuel costs when using a Council owned vehicle.

c) Administrative tools

Administrative tools should be provided to Councillors as required to assist Councillors in their role.

Administrative tools include:

- office space and meeting rooms
- computers
- mobile phones
- stationery
- access to photocopiers
- printers
- publications
- use of Council landline telephones and internet access in Council offices

Secretarial support may also be provided for the Mayor and Councillors.

Council may provide a Councillor with home office equipment including computer, internet access if necessary.



d) Maintenance costs of Council owned equipment

Council will be 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 which fall under Council's asset replacement program.

e) Name Badge and Safety Equipment for Councillors

A local government may provide Councillors with:

- a name badge;
- the necessary safety equipment for use on official business, e.g. safety helmet/boots:
- a dress shirt to wear at conferences/meetings.

f) Telecommunication needs - mobile devices and computers

Computers and mobile devices are supplied to the Mayor and Councillors for official use.

g) Insurance cover

Councillors will be covered under relevant Council insurance policies while on Council business. Specifically, insurance cover will be provided for public liability, professional indemnity, Councillor's liability and person accident, and domestic and overseas travel.

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.

7. DEFINITIONS

CEO	Means the Chief Executive Officer of Blackall-Tambo Regional Council
Council	Means the Blackall-Tambo Regional Council, it elected Councillors, management and employees.
Council Employees	Means all permanent, casual, and temporary employees, contractors, volunteers, apprentices, trainees and work experience students.
Council Business	Means the official business of a Councillor as generally described in Chapter 2, Part 1 of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> . Council business should result in a benefit being achieved either for the local government and/or the local government area.
Councillors	Means the currently elected Mayor and Councillors of Blackall-Tambo Regional Council.
Expense	Means payments made by Council to reimburse Councillors for their reasonable expenses incurred or be incurred when discharging their duties as Councillors. These payments are not regarded as remuneration. The expenses may be either reimbursed to Councillors or paid direct by Council for something that is deemed a necessary cost or charge when on Council business.
Facility	Means the 'tools of trade' provided by Council, required to enable Councillors to perform their duties with relative ease and at a standard appropriate to fulfil their professional role for the community.
Professional Development	Means attendance by a Councillor at an event where the Councillor expects to develop further skills and knowledge relevant to their role as a Councillor.



Representation	Means attendance by a Councillor at various community and special interest representative group meetings and events, which are relevant to the role of Councillor.
Reasonable	Means the application of sound judgement and consideration of what is prudent, responsible and acceptable to the community when determining levels of facilities and expenditure.
Training	Means any facilitated learning activity which is considered by Council to be a requirement for Councillors to discharge their duties and responsibilities as Councillors.