

<h2>COUNCILLOR EXPENSES POLICY</h2>	Date Adopted:	9 June 2026
	Adopted By:	Council
	Review Due:	9 June 2030
	Responsible Officer:	Governance Coordinator
	Directorate:	People and Performance
	EDRMS No:	

PURPOSE

This Policy supports the requirements of Section 41 of the *Local Government Act 2020* in relation to payment of allowances and reimbursement of expenses for Councillors and members of delegated committees.

It provides an overview of how Council provides resources and training to its Councillors and members of delegated committees to ensure they can carry out their functions and duties.

This Policy provides guidelines in relation to:

- Councillor Allowances;
- Resources provided by Council;
- Reimbursement of Expenses for Councillors and members of delegated committees; and
- Training and Conferences.

DEFINITIONS

The Act	means the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>
CEO	means the Chief Executive Officer
CEO's EA	means the Chief Executive Officer's Executive Assistant.
Delegated Committees	means a Committee established under Section 63 of the Act
Training and Conferences	includes all training, conferences, events, functions, seminars etc.
Mandatory Training	means mandatory annual professional development training as per <i>Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024</i>

APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Councillors elected to the Southern Grampians Shire Council and members of delegated Committees established under Section 63 of the Act.

Expenditure should always be in the interests of the Southern Grampians Shire community

and is allocated from Council's annual budget.

Claims for any expenditure not included in this Policy will be subject to a Council resolution.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- Receipts/invoices must be provided for any expenses which are being claimed. Failure to produce a receipt/invoice may result in the expense not being reimbursed.
- Receipts/invoices must be itemised and contain relevant information about the expense. EFTPOS receipts/invoices with just a price are not acceptable.
- All reimbursements will be paid in arrears.
- If a Councillor does not claim a particular expense or use a particular resource the budget allocation cannot be rolled over into the next financial year.
- Requests for reimbursement should be received within 60 days of the cost being incurred. Claims for expenses six months or older will not be reimbursed. All claims must be made by 7 July to ensure that they are paid in the correct financial year.

COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES

The Act provides for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors to be paid an allowance. These allowances are in accordance with a determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal. These allowances are reviewed by the Tribunal on an annual basis.

Allowances shall be paid monthly in advance, provided that upon a Councillor ceasing to hold office or pending an election, payment shall be withheld until such time as the Councillor is declared elected and signs an Oath or Affirmation.

Payment will be made by electronic funds transfer into the Councillor's nominated bank account.

If a Councillor is taking a leave of absence, they can elect to be paid all, some or none of their allowance during this time.

It should be noted that in accordance with section 35(6) of the Act, a Councillor is not to be taken to be absent from Council meetings during the period of 6 months after the Councillor or their spouse or domestic partner –

- (a) becomes the natural parent of a child; or
- (b) adopts a child under the age of 16 years –

and the Councillors has responsibilities for the care of the child during that period.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Mayoral Car

Council will make available at its cost to the Mayor a fully registered, insured, maintained and fuelled vehicle for use by the Mayor as required to carry out all duties. The vehicle type and usage shall be in accordance with Council's Motor Vehicle Usage Policy and Sustainable Motor Vehicle Procurement Policy.

Mayoral Office

A private office suitably equipped with quality furniture and shelving, including a desk and

meeting area will be made available to the Mayor.

COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Councillors will be provided with mobile phones and tablet computers. These devices are to be used for official Council business only. Council will pay all connection fees, rental charges and all Council business call and data charges. Any costs in relation to private use of these devices will be reimbursed to Council by the relevant Councillor.

All items must be returned to Council within 30 days of the conclusion of the term of office.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Stationery

The Council shall, upon request, provide Councillors with standard stationery held or obtained generally for the organisation's requirements.

This stationery may include:

- Business cards;
- Name badges;
- Writing pads/notebooks;
- Pens; and
- Diaries and planners.

Mail Inward

All mail received by Council is deemed to be Council business and will be opened by either the CEO EA or the Council Support Officer. Private mail should not be sent via the Council address.

The following provides the basis for how external invitations are received and managed:

- Upon receiving invitations the Council Support Officer will distribute invitations and the relevant particulars as specified in the invitation.
- If Councillors advise the Council Support Officer that they will be attending an event, the event will be put into the Councillors electronic calendar.
- Invitations addressed to the Mayor will be referred to the Mayor for acceptance. If the Mayor is unable to attend other Councillors will be given the opportunity to attend. The invitation can be discussed at the next Briefing Session of Council, or sent via email if urgent.

Apparel

The Council shall, upon request, lend Councillors protective clothing required to assist in carrying out the duties of office. This clothing is to be returned promptly upon the completion of the activity for which the clothing was required.

This clothing shall be limited to high visibility vests, wet weather pants and pullovers, gumboots, winter jackets and/or hats, as may be held in the store to meet the organisation's requirements.

Return of Resources

All resources provided to Councillors are provided for use by the Councillor in the conduct of their duties of office. All equipment provided and items purchased shall be returned within 30 days of the retirement or termination of office.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Councillors are entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses for attendance at:

- Scheduled and Unscheduled Council Meetings, Briefing Sessions of the Council and Committee Meetings of the Council;
- Official Council Functions;
- Meetings arising as a result of a Councillor being appointed by the Council to an external body;
- Training or conferences the Councillor is attending which Council has paid for; and
- Other meetings, events or occasions as pre-approved by the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer from time to time, or by resolution of the Council.

Expenses not falling into one of the categories above will not be approved for reimbursement.

All Councillor travel should be undertaken utilising the most direct route and the most practicable and economical mode of transport. When travelling interstate the mode of transport is to be the most cost effective form of transport. All air travel will be in economy class. The transport options to be utilised in priority order is:

1. Public transport
2. Car pooling with Council vehicles
3. Council pool vehicle
4. Car pooling with private vehicles
5. Private vehicle

The Mayoral car may also be available by agreement between the Mayor and Councillor/s as a further option.

Any expenses arising from a breach of road, traffic parking or other regulations or laws or for damage or loss of a vehicle will not be reimbursed or funded by Council.

Travel claims will be from the Councillors notified place of normal residence.

Costs relating to private vehicle use will be reimbursed where it is a necessary Council expense incurred while performing duties as a Councillor. The maximum allowance travel rate will be as set by the Australian Taxation Office.

Council will cover the travel expenses in relation to travel via public transportation, including air travel. Where possible this travel should be booked in advance and paid for by Council.

Expenses will be reimbursed to Councillors following receipt of a completed Councillor Claim for Travel Expenses Form.

Parking

Council will reimburse Councillors for parking when required. Expenses will be reimbursed to Councillors following receipt of a completed Councillor Claim for Reimbursement of Expenses Form, together with the relevant receipts/invoices.

REMOTE TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

Councillors are entitled to receive a remote area travel allowance as determined by the Independent Remuneration Tribunal.

The remote area travel allowance for councillors applies to travelling more than 50 km from home to attend official meetings or functions per day.

The remote area allowance only applies when the councillor travels more than 50 km only

from home to the official meetings or functions not the return trip. The current allowance is equal to \$48.90 per day up to a maximum of \$6,112.50 per annum

CHILD CARE EXPENSES

The Council will reimburse the cost of necessary child care expenses for children up to and including 16 years of age while a Councillor is conducting Council business or for a member of a delegated committee.

Child care expenses are not eligible for reimbursement if paid to a family member or a person who normally or regularly lives with the Councillor or member, except where a live-in (professional) helper such as a nanny is required to work extra time at extra expense because of the Councillor's or member's duties.

Each child care expense claim shall be substantiated by a receipt from the caregiver showing the dates and times care was provided, and the Councillor or member shall provide the reason why the care was required on each occasion.

Child Care Expenses will be reimbursed for attendance at:

- Scheduled and Unscheduled Council Meetings, Briefing Sessions of the Council and Committee Meetings of the Council;
- Official Council Functions;
- Meetings arising as a result of a Councillor being appointed by the Council to an external body;
- Training or conferences the Councillor is attending which Council has paid for; and
- Other meetings, events or occasions as agreed by the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer from time to time, or by resolution of the Council.

Expenses will be reimbursed to Councillors following receipt of a completed Councillor Claim for Reimbursement of Expenses Form, together with the relevant receipts/invoices.

CARER EXPENSES

Council will reimburse the costs associated with supplying care for a person who resides with the Councillor and with whom the Councillor is in a care relationship, as defined by the *Carers Recognition Act 2012* (s4).

Care expenses will only be reimbursed when:

- The care is provided whilst the Councillor is undertaking official Council business; and
- The care is provided by a recognised care provider who does not reside permanently or temporarily with the Councillor; and
- A receipt from the caregiver is received showing the dates and times the care was provided and attached to a completed and signed Claim for Reimbursement form.

Carer expenses are not eligible for reimbursement if paid to a family member or a person who normally or regularly lives with the Councillor, except where a live-in (professional) carer is required to work extra time at extra expense because of the Councillor's duties.

CONFERENCES AND NON-MANDATORY DISCRETIONAL TRAINING

Each Councillor will have an individual budget to attend training and conferences during the financial year. This budget will be set annually by Council through its annual budget process.

This budget allocation will not be held over from one financial year to the next if not fully

expended. Once a Councillor budget allocation has run out, Councillors can still attend training and conferences at their own expense.

A Councillor who is funded by Council to attend a conference or training shall participate as a representative of Council, not as an individual.

All attendance at training and conferences shall be booked through the Council Support Officer, following approval by the Mayor of a completed and signed Councillor Application to Attend Training or Conference Form.

Costs associated with the training, conferences and seminars shall be separately disclosed for and include items such as travel costs, meals, accommodation etc. Separate ledgers exist for each of these items.

Reporting on Training and Conferences

At the next available Council Meeting, following the training or conference, Councillors shall present a verbal report to the Council under delegate reports, providing information about the key points of the training or conference.

Attendance by the Mayor at Events

Council recognises that the role of the Mayor carries the expectation that the incumbent will represent Council at events, sometimes at short notice. Therefore, the budget set to attend training and conferences does not apply to attendances at any activities specific to the role of Mayor, or any Councillor attending on behalf of the Mayor.

ALGA and MAV

The Mayor (or appointed delegate) and CEO will attempt to regularly participate in the ALGC and MAV local government events. Additional Councillors may opt to attend these events and costs must be covered by their training and conferences annual budget.

Procedure for Approval

The Mayor will approve Councillor attendance at training and conferences. Attendance at training and conferences **will only be approved where:**

- The event provides an opportunity to receive or upgrade relevant training and skills related to the role of a Councillor;
- The event provides the opportunity to learn key information about an issue of public policy related to the Southern Grampians Shire community; or
- The event has the potential to foster broad economic development opportunities with the Southern Grampians Shire.

Where multiple Councillors wish to attend the same event priority must be given to the Councillor who has been appointed as the Council Representative through the Council Delegated Committees process, if applicable.

Where Councillors wish to attend training or conferences which do not meet the above approval requirements they may do so, but the Councillor will be responsible for covering all the expenses in relation to attending the event and will not be reimbursed by Council.

There must be sufficient funds available in the Councillors individual training and conferences budget to cover the cost of the Councillor attending the event.

The Councillor Application to Attend Training or Conference Form, attached to this Policy, must be completed by the Councillor and forwarded to the Mayor for approval. Once approved the Council Support Officer will book the training or conference for the Councillor. No training or conference, or accompanying accommodation, will be booked without approval from the Mayor.

Registration Fees

Registration fees for training and conferences will be paid by Council.

Accommodation

Where overnight accommodation is required Council will provide accommodation to a maximum value as listed below:

Capital cities up to \$280.00 per night Regional centres up to \$200.00 per night.

This limit may be increased with prior approval from the CEO if extenuating circumstances apply, such as:

- Accommodation is unavailable at or below the maximum value; and/or
- It would be unreasonable to book accommodation at or below the maximum value if it would necessitate additional travel resulting in additional travel costs being incurred.

Accommodation will be arranged to achieve the best value for Council, with breakfast and parking included wherever possible. The Council Support Officer will book the accommodation upon receipt of an approved Councillor Application to Attend Training or Conference Form.

Should Councillors elect to stay at accommodation that is more expensive, Council will only cover costs to the value listed above.

Meals

When a Councillor is attending training and conferences Council will reimburse the maximum following provisions in relation to meals unless there is a set meal cost included in the training or conference package, in which case Council will pay that higher cost.

Meal costs includes beverage costs but excludes alcohol. Meal reimbursements will be at the rate set by the Australian Taxation Office in the current Taxation Determination. Incidental costs such as snacks and drinks will not be covered by Council unless included as part of a meal as stipulated above.

Should Councillors elect to consume meals that are more expensive, Council will only cover costs to the value listed above.

Accompanying Partner / Guests

Any additional attendances fees, accommodation costs, meal costs, or any other costs incurred as a result of the attendance of partners and/or children shall be borne by the Councillor.

Refreshments (Mini-Bar)

All mini-bar accounts are the responsibility of the Councillor.

Other Accommodation Costs

Unless otherwise approved, in-room movie charges and dry-cleaning/laundry costs will not be reimbursed to a Councillor or paid for by Council.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURE

Expenses will be reimbursed to Councillors and members of delegated committees once the relevant claim form and itemised receipts have been submitted to the Council Support Officer and approved by the CEO. Claim forms must contain the required information and be submitted within the timeframes outlined in this policy.

The Claim for Reimbursement of Expenses form is to be completed for:

- Childcare reimbursements

- Carer reimbursements
- Meal reimbursements
- Travel reimbursements – parking, taxi and public transport

And must be accompanied by receipts which include the date, times (childcare and carer) and amounts.

The Claim for Travel Expenses form is to be completed for:

- Mileage expenses

And must contain the date, purpose of travel i.e. Briefing, Council Meeting, odometer readings and number of kilometres travelled.

Completed forms and receipts can be mailed or hand delivered to the Council Support Officer at Council's Business Centre, 111 Brown Street, Hamilton or emailed to councillorrequests@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au.

ANNUAL MANDATORY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

All Mayors, Deputy Mayors, and Councillors must complete mandatory training within certain timeframes.

The Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 prescribe the matters that must be covered in the delivery of the mandatory training and the timelines for the completion of the training.

The mandatory training includes:

- Mayoral training – This must be completed by all Mayors, Acting Mayors (appointed for one month or more), and Deputy Mayors within one month of being elected to the role.
- Councillor induction training – This must be completed by all Councillors within four months of taking the oath or affirmation of office.
- Professional development training – This must be completed by all Councillors annually, beginning in the first full calendar year after being elected.

Processes for mandatory training:

Mandatory training content and timing will be determined by the CEO, in consultation with the Mayor and Councillors.

- Councillors must sign and date a written declaration before the Council's CEO annually by 31 December, which records the completion of training, as required by the Act and Regulations.
- Councillors allowances must be withheld if the training is not completed annually by 31 December and the declaration made as required.
- The CEO must ensure the completion of training by Councillors elected to fill an extraordinary vacancy.
- The CEO must ensure that Councillors who are unable to complete the professional development training due to a leave of absence complete the training within one month after returning from leave.
- Budget allocation for Annual Mandatory Professional Development Training is separate from the budget for non-discretionary training and conferences, which relate to representations on internal committees and external bodies via a Council Resolution appointment process.

Councillor Induction

Any Councillor Induction training provided to Councillors following elections will be fully funded by Council, it will not be paid for out of individual Councillor's training and conference budgets.

INSURANCE

Councillors are covered by the following Council Insurance Policies while involved in official Council Business, including attendance at meetings of external bodies as Council's representative:

- Personal Accident Insurance;
- Public Liability Insurance;
- Professional Indemnity Insurance;
- Councillors and Officer Liability Insurance;
- Travel Insurance; and
- WorkCover (as a deemed employee).

Council will pay the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim made against a Councillor arising from Council Business where any claim is accepted by Council's Insurers, whether defended or not.

LEGAL COSTS

Other than by specific Council resolution or in accordance with a Council Policy, any legal expenses incurred by a Councillor shall be the responsibility of that Councillor.

REPORTING ON EXPENDITURE

The CEO shall ensure that any reporting of Councillor expenses and travel as required by the Act or any other legislation or regulations is completed.

Expenditure will be provided individually to Councillors quarterly at briefing sessions for information only. Full year expenditure will be published in the Annual Report using Councillor names and the below categories, as required by the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020:

- Travel expenses
- Professional Development expenses; and
- Expenses to support the performance of the role.

Annually, the expenses report will be subject to oversight and review by the Audit and Risk Committee of Council.

IMPLEMENTATION

This Policy will be published on Council's website and a copy provided to all Councillors.

CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

It is considered that this policy is compatible with the relevant human rights identified in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*.

REVIEW

This Policy must be reviewed a minimum of once every 4 years, or in line with legislative changes.

Previously adopted:

- 14 December 2014
- 14 February 2018
- 10 April 2019
- 10 February 2026

AUTHORISATION

Adopted by Council 9 June 2026.

END

COUNCILLOR APPLICATION TO ATTEND TRAINING OR CONFERENCE



Councillor:

TRAINING OR CONFERENCE DETAILS

Title of Training/Conference:			
Training/Conference Provider:			
Training/Conference Duration: (number of days)			
Date/s of Training/Conference:	From:		To:
Cost of Training/Conference:			
Location of Training/Conference:			
Accommodation Required?			
Benefit to Council: <i>(Please tick relevant benefit/s below)</i>			
The event provides an opportunity to receive or upgrade relevant training and skills related to the role of a Councillor.			
The event provides the opportunity to learn key information about an issue of public policy related to the Southern Grampians Shire community.			
The event has the potential to foster broad economic development opportunities with the Southern Grampians Shire.			

Please attach details of training or conference where possible.

I certify that the above expenses have been incurred in accordance with Southern Grampian Shire Council's Expenses Policy and the *Local Government Act 2020*.

.....
Signature of Councillor / Member

.....
Approved by Mayor

Office Use Only:

Ledger No: