



Councillor Support and Expenses Policy

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1. Purpose

The Policy supports Councillors to perform official council duties, by ensuring that expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their role are reimbursed and provides guidance on:

- allowances;
- reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses;
- professional development;
- administrative support and the provision of resources and facilities; and
- reporting requirements.

The policy is intended to ensure that Councillors are supported to perform their duties without disadvantage.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors of the East Gippsland Shire Council (Council).

In the event Council establishes a Delegated Committee, the provisions of this Policy relating to the reimbursement of expenses will apply to a member who is not a Councillor (if any), as if they were a Councillor.

3. Context

Council must adopt and maintain a Council Expenses Policy under section 41 of the Act that must:

- a) specify procedures to be followed in applying for reimbursement and in reimbursing expenses;
- b) comply with any requirements prescribed by the regulations in relation to the reimbursement of expenses;
- c) provide for the reimbursement of childcare costs where the provision of childcare is reasonably required for a Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform their role; and
- d) have particular regard to expenses incurred by a Councillor who is carer in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*.

4. Statement

This Policy ensures that the reimbursement of these expenses is in accordance with the Act and meets the Act's principles of public transparency; achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community; and ensuring the ongoing financial viability of the council.

Councillor duties are those performed by a councillor as a necessary part of their role, in achieving the objectives of council. These duties may include (but are not limited to):

- meetings of the Council, a delegated committee, its advisory boards, advisory or consultative committees;
- meetings, briefing sessions and civic or ceremonial functions convened by the Mayor or Council or a delegated committee;
- meetings of community groups, organisations and statutory authorities to which a Councillor has been appointed as Council representative or is authorised by Council to attend in their role as a Councillor;
- meetings, functions or other official role as a representative of the Mayor or Council or a delegated committee;
- other meetings, inspections, community forums or events attended by a Councillor in the course of their duties as a Councillor; and
- conferences, seminars, events and professional development being undertaken by a Councillor.

4.1 Principles

Council is committed to ensuring that Councillor out-of-pocket expenses are managed responsibly, transparently, and in line with community expectations. The following principles will guide the reimbursement and management of Councillor expenses:

Principle	Statement
Accountability	All expenses must be reasonable, necessary and directly related to a Councillor's official duties, with clear justification and supporting documentation provided when submitting claims.
Transparency	Expense claims and reimbursements will be documented, reported, and made available in accordance with Council's governance and transparency obligations.
Prudent Use of Public Funds	Claims must reflect genuine costs incurred and must not include excessive or unjustifiable expenses.
Ethical and Responsible Conduct	Councillors must act with integrity, honesty, and professionalism when incurring and claiming expenses.

5. Allowances

5.1 Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor Allowances

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors are entitled to receive an allowance pursuant to section 39 of the Act and in accordance with the determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal under the *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019*.

Allowances paid to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor cannot exceed the amount specified in the relevant determination by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not entitled to receive an allowance as a Councillor while receiving the allowance as the Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

A Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor may elect, in accordance with section 39 (5) of the Act, to receive:

- a) the entire allowance to which they are entitled; or
- b) a specified part of the allowance to which they are entitled; or
- c) no allowance.

Allowances are taxable income and are paid fortnightly in arrears. Personal taxation implications are the responsibility of individual Councillors.

5.2 Remote Area Travel Allowance

The Determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal provides for a remote area travel allowance which is updated annually. Refer to attached Schedule 1.

If a Council member normally resides more than 50 kilometres by the shortest possible practicable road distance from the location or locations specified for the conduct of ordinary, special or committee meetings of the Council, or any municipal or community functions which have been authorised by Council resolution for the Council member to attend, the Council member is entitled to be paid an allowance for each day on which one or more meetings or authorised functions were attended by the Council member, up to a maximum amount per annum.

The remote area travel allowance is not paid on days that there are no meetings or authorised functions.

5.3 Applications for Remote Area Travel Allowance

Applications for payment of a Remote Area Travel Allowance must:

- be made using the Remote Area Travel Allowance Claim form available in the Councillor Portal;
- be submitted within 60 days¹ of attendance at the event/meeting;
- include details of the date, location, purpose of the meeting; and
- odometer reading at the start and end of journey for kilometres travelled on each occasion.

Late claims will not be accepted.

¹ Where there is an upcoming Council election, all claims for reimbursement of expenses must be submitted by the end of the Council term.

6. Resources, Facilities and Support

Council will provide resources, facilities and support to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors to enable them to effectively perform their roles.

6.1 Name Badge and Business Cards

Each Councillor will be provided with a name badge and business cards.

6.2 Building Access

Each Councillor will receive a swipe card enabling access to the Nicholson Room and public area at the Corporate Centre at 273 Main Street, Bairnsdale.

6.3 Office Accommodation

A Mayoral office is located at the Corporate Centre at 273 Main Street, Bairnsdale, for use by the Mayor for purposes directly related to their official Council duties.

Councillors may use the Nicholson Room for purposes directly related to their official Council duties.

6.4 Administrative Support

Administrative support will be made available by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to assist the Mayor in performing their official Council duties and to assist Councillors with diary management and responses to correspondence, enquiries and requests for service as part of their official Council duties.

Council's letterhead stationery is only available for official Council business and may be used by Councillors only when approved by the CEO.

Council business papers, personal mail and other Council information will be forwarded electronically. If, and when circumstances render it necessary, documents may also be placed in Councillors' lockers at the Corporate Centre.

6.5 Representative Memberships

Council will organise and pay for collective Council or individual Councillor membership to peak Australian Local Government industry bodies.

6.6 Meals and Refreshments

Where Council or Committee meetings are held at times which extend through normal mealtimes, Council will provide suitable meals served on the premises. Alcohol will not be provided.

6.7 Information and Communications Technology

Councillors will be provided a computer with a laptop and bag, access to email, a mobile phone and a working from home kit (dual monitors, keyboard, mouse and headset) for Council business. Councillors will be provided with access to a printer located at the Corporate Centre. Where the CEO deems it necessary, support for internet connectivity at a Councillor's residence will be provided. All equipment provided by Council is to be used only for the purpose of performing official Council duties and remains the property of Council. All equipment must be returned at the end of the Council term of office or upon retirement/resignation of the Councillor.

6.8 Insurance

Councillors are covered under the following Council insurance policies on a 24-hour basis while discharging the duties of office of Councillor, including attendance at meetings of external bodies as Council's representative:

- Public Liability;
- Professional Indemnity;
- Councillors and Officers Liability;
- Personal Accident (accompanying partners are also covered); and
- Corporate Travel.

These policies will apply to claims that arise from an occurrence in connection with Council business.

Items of Council equipment provided to Councillors to assist in performing their role, including motor vehicles, are covered for damage or theft under Council's insurance policies. Councillors are expected to exercise due care in protecting the equipment from damage or theft. Personal items and effects left in Council vehicles are not covered by Council's insurance policies.

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. Councillors will pay the excess on the vehicle policy or any policy covering other items of Council equipment provided to Councillors to assist in performing their role, if they are found to have not taken due care in protecting the vehicle or equipment from damage or theft.

6.9 Legal Support

Where legal proceedings are brought against a Councillor in connection with an act or omission in their functions as a Councillor, a Councillor may be entitled to have legal costs up to \$2,500 reimbursed. Legal costs will not be reimbursed for any defamation action brought by a Councillor.

In accordance with section 43A of the Act, Council must not indemnify a Councillor for legal costs incurred where the expense relates to:

- a) an Internal Arbitration Process under section 143 of the Act; or
- b) a Councillor Conduct Panel Hearing under section 154 of the Act.

A Councillor who is a party to these processes does not have a right to representation unless otherwise determined by an Arbiter under section 141(2)(c) of the Act or a Councillor Conduct Panel under section 163(2)(b) the Act. Such determinations will only be made by an Arbiter or Councillor Conduct Panel if it is considered that a party requires representation to ensure the process or hearing is conducted fairly. In these circumstances, a Councillor may seek reimbursement of representation expenses in accordance with this section.

In addition to the above, the CEO must refuse reimbursement in the following circumstances:

- a) to the extent the costs are unreasonable;
- b) the costs have been incurred through the engagement of a lawyer from a legal firm not on the Municipal Association of Victoria panel, or pre-approved by the CEO;
- c) the CEO considers the matter for which reimbursement of legal costs is sought is or was outside the Councillor’s official Council duties; or
- d) the CEO considers the Councillor has not acted in good faith or lawfully or properly in relation to the matter for which reimbursement of legal costs is sought.

A Councillor may seek reimbursement up to \$2,500 per request, and no more than two requests per financial year can be made by an individual Councillor.

Councillors must engage a lawyer from a legal firm on the Municipal Association of Victoria panel or otherwise as approved by the CEO prior to any expense being incurred, otherwise they will not be granted reimbursement.

A Councillor will repay any reimbursed costs where there is a finding by a court, tribunal, or regulatory authority in relation to the matter the Councillor has not acted in good faith or has acted unlawfully or improperly.

6.10 Applications for Reimbursement of Legal Expenses

Applications for reimbursement of legal expenses must be:

- made in accordance with section 7.8 of this Policy; and
- accompanied by a declaration that the matter for which reimbursement of legal costs is sought related to their role as a Councillor and that they have acted in good faith and not unlawfully or improperly.

7. Expenses and Reimbursements

7.1 Reimbursement of Expenses Generally

Councillors are entitled to the reimbursement of expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties. 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 40(1) of the Act, Councillors will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses that:

- are bona fide expenses;
- have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or member of a delegated committee; and
- are reasonably necessary for the Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform that role.

Reimbursement of any expense not specifically provided for in this Policy will require approval by the CEO.

7.2 Travel Expenses

Council will pay for the costs of Councillors' travel if it is required for official Council duties, in accordance with the below guidelines.

Where travel is by air, economy class will be the standard.

Where travel between Bairnsdale and Melbourne and return is by train a reserved ticket will be purchased to guarantee you a specific seat in the reserved carriage(s).

All interstate travel proposed to be undertaken by a Councillor and paid for by Council requires prior approval by the CEO.

All international travel proposed to be undertaken by a Councillor and paid for by Council requires prior approval by a formal resolution of Council.

7.3 Accommodation and Meals

Requests for accommodation by Councillors will generally be supported where travel arrangements prevent the Councillor from returning to their usual place of residence by 7:00pm, subject to CEO approval.

Councillors who reside in the more remote areas of the Shire are encouraged to stay overnight following Council meetings, events and functions that conclude well after normal business hours. The cost of this accommodation will be met by Council.

When a Councillor is required to stay overnight and meals are not provided by Council or at a function attended in an official capacity, the Councillor will be reimbursed for meals as indicated in the table below. Refer to Schedule 1 for meal expense limits.

Meal Type	Reimbursement Entitlement
Breakfast	The day following an overnight stay
Lunch	The day before and following an overnight stay, if required
Dinner	The night of an overnight stay

Councillors will be provided with a reasonable standard of accommodation. As a guide a standard room or four-star accommodation is considered appropriate with the most cost-effective option to be provided. Councillors may accept room upgrades if the upgrade is at no additional cost to Council.

All bookings for accommodation are to be made by the Councillor Support Officer.

Where meals are not included at meetings, conferences, seminars and professional development events, Councillors can be reimbursed for meals and beverages in accordance with the amounts determined by the ATO. Councillors are not permitted to seek reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses to cover meals or refreshments for anyone other than themselves.

7.4 Childcare Expenses

Council will reimburse the cost of childcare where the provision of childcare is reasonably required for a Councillor to perform their role. The reimbursement of childcare will be capped at the Federal Government hourly rate for in-home care per family and the rate will be applied in accordance with the Federal Government recommendations.

Reimbursement for childcare costs by Council is limited to:

- a child or children aged less than 13 years;
- costs associated with childcare only and no other household duties;
- costs of childcare not covered by other entitlements such as the Australian Government Child Care benefit;
- childcare services that are operating as a registered business in Victoria; and
- childcare services that are not a relative or household member.

Subject to prior approval by the CEO, a Councillor with dependent children who is attending a conference or seminar at which a designated children's program is provided may enrol their dependent children in that program at Council's expense.

7.5 Care Related Expenses

For Councillors who would otherwise be a primary care giver for immediate family members who are elderly or sick, have a disability or mental illness, or a care relationship for children up to 15 years old, Council will, subject to the requirements of this section, reimburse the cost of expenses incurred in order to provide care for the relevant person when the Councillor who would otherwise be the primary care giver is engaged in discharging their duties as a Councillor.

For Councillors who are in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the Carers Recognition Act 2012, Council will, subject to the requirements of this section, reimburse the cost of expenses incurred in order to provide care for the relevant person when the Councillor who would otherwise be providing the care is performing their duties as a Councillor.

Council will only reimburse Councillors for carer expenses paid to:

- an accredited care provider; or
- a person providing care who does not:
 - a) have a familial or like relationship with the Councillor or member of a delegated committee; or
 - b) reside either permanently or temporarily with the Councillor or member of a delegated committee; or
 - c) have a relationship with the Councillor or member of a delegated committee or their partner such that it would be inappropriate for Council to reimburse monies paid to the care provider.

Care expenses may include hourly fees as paid by the Councillor to a care provider and/or agency booking fees if applicable.

7.6 All Abilities Access

Where possible, Council will meet reasonable expenses to assist a Councillor with a disability to perform their official Council duties.

7.7 Exclusions

In addition to any exclusions outlined in other sections of this Policy, Council will not reimburse the following expenses:

- a) any costs arising from a breach of road, traffic, parking or other regulations or laws,
- b) expenses incurred which:
 - are not bona fide expenses;
 - have not been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or member of a delegated committee; or
 - are not reasonably necessary for the Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform that role;
- c) the cost of the purchase of any alcohol; and
- d) any costs incurred for immediate family members/associates/partners to attend conferences and events (other than in the case of attendance of a Councillor's partner at a conference or seminar where the presence of their partner is necessary to support the business or representational needs of Council).

7.8 Applications for Reimbursement of Expenses

All applications for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses must be:

- made using the Councillor Expense Reimbursement form available in the Councillor Portal²;
- submitted within 60 days³ of the expense being incurred;
- accompanied by proof of expenditure, such as a tax invoice (credit card/EFT receipts will not be accepted);
- specify the name and purpose of the event/function associated with the expenditure; and
- signed by the Councillor to declare that the expense meets the requirements of section 40(1) of the Act.

Late claims will not be accepted.

² If Council establishes a Delegated Committee, reimbursement claim forms will be made available in the relevant Committee's portal.

³ Where there is an upcoming Council election, all claims for reimbursement of expenses must be submitted by the end of the Council term.

Applications for reimbursement of expenses related to personal vehicle use must include the odometer reading at the start and end of each trip and will be referenced back to the Councillors diary for accuracy. If a journey includes elements of both performing the role of a Councillor and private use, only a proportion of travel commensurate with performing the role of a Councillor can be claimed.

Reimbursements will not be approved without sufficient evidence and will be paid by accounts payable on a fortnightly basis into the nominated bank account after approval is given by the CEO.

8. Professional Development

For the purposes of this section, professional development is defined as any activity that improves and/or increases the professional knowledge, competence, skill and effectiveness of a Councillor. This includes (but is not limited to) activities such as courses, workshops, conferences, seminars and coaching.

8.1 Annual Professional Development

Section 33A of the Act requires all Councillors to complete professional development training each year of their term, beginning in the year following their election. This training must address the matters prescribed by Regulation 6A(2) and on completion, Councillors must make a written declaration before the Chief Executive Officer by 31 December, (or 1 September in an election year). Failure to do so will result in the allowance being withheld until the training is completed and a declaration made (section 33B).

Council will deliver annual training to the Councillor group to cover the prescribed matters, however Councillors can request support under this policy to undertake additional professional development activities to address specific skills or knowledge gaps, or areas of interest.

8.2 Conferences and Seminars

Attendance at relevant conferences and seminars is considered necessary for effective representation and advocacy for the Shire and supports the professional development of Councillors in their role.

Councillors may attend seminars and conferences that:

- relate directly to performing official Council duties; or
- are organised by a Local Government peak body/association; and
- have a demonstrable benefit for the East Gippsland Shire community.

Councillors must discuss proposed attendance at conferences and seminars with the CEO.

8.3 Budget

Each Councillor may access up to \$5,000 per financial year to fund approved additional professional development activities, including attendance at conferences and Seminars. With prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer, Councillors may access additional funding in a specific year provided the expenditure does not exceed \$20,000 across the four-year term of office, or pro-rata equivalent for Councillors appointed between general elections.

8.4 Applications for Professional Development

Councillors are required to discuss their interest in undertaking professional development activities with the CEO in the first instance.

To assist the discussion, Councillors are encouraged to provide the following information:

- details of the activity and any supporting information (for example a brochure or website link);
- how the activity will support and/or improve your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a Councillor;
- cost of the activity;
- time commitment required;
- additional expenses that may be incurred such as travel and/or accommodation; and/or
- whether the activity can be completed within the Council term.

All arrangements associated with approved Councillor professional development activities (including registration, travel and accommodation/meals) will be organised through the Councillor Support Officer.

8.5 Accountability

Where Professional Development activities involve interstate or overseas travel Councillors must complete a Record of Interstate or Overseas Travel form providing details of the date, destination, purpose and total cost of the travel.

After attending a conference or seminar Councillors are required to provide a report to the next Council meeting. The summary should outline the benefits of the professional development activity to themselves personally, to Council and/or the East Gippsland Shire community.

9. Motor Vehicles

Several key principals underpin the provision and allocation of vehicles to Councillors, with the following applicable:

- a) Travel is a requirement of Councillors and vehicles are made available primarily to support the Councillor to perform their role.
- b) The type of vehicles provided will be fit for purpose for performing the role of a Councillor.
- c) Vehicles will be selected in the most cost effective, environmentally conscious, and socially responsible way.
- d) Private use of vehicles will require a contribution by the beneficiary commensurate with the additional costs incurred for that use.

9.1 Motor Vehicle Options

Councillors are provided with a range of options related to travel using motor vehicles for Council Business. These options include:

- provision of a Council vehicle with full private use;
- provision of a Council vehicle for business use only; and
- use of a Council Fleet vehicle or private vehicle.

Council has set targets for the take up of electric vehicles in the Council fleet, in the Council Plan, which electric Councillor vehicles will assist to achieve.

All vehicles will be provided with a first aid kit. Vehicles which are used in isolated and remote areas may also be fitted with additional safety and telecommunication equipment. Smoking is not permitted in any Council vehicle.

Option 1: Council Vehicle, Full Private Use

Councillors may elect to be provided with use of a Council vehicle that is available for use for both performing the role of a Councillor and private purposes, subject only to the restriction outlined in section 9.5 Use of Council Vehicles during the Election Period.

As a general policy, small to medium-sized cars and SUVs will be allocated. However, alternative vehicle types may be approved at the discretion of the CEO. Councillor vehicles are turned over on a four-yearly cycle. The organisation will not provide six-cylinder vehicles unless there is a specific business need, with the fleet predominantly four-cylinder or hybrid vehicles. Vehicles will generally be of a mid-range specification. Electric models will be made available if supply and servicing networks are adequate within the municipal district, vehicles are fit for purpose in performing the role of a Councillor and represent a cost-effective option.

The Councillor will be required to make a contribution, as determined by Council from time-to-time, via a deduction from their Councillor allowance, the proportion of the total vehicle ownership costs, that it is equivalent to the proportion of private use. The selection of vehicle type by the Councillor will have a bearing on these costs.

Councillors are required to keep a logbook of vehicle use for performing the role of a Councillor and private usage for a three-month period during the first 12 months of the Council term, at a minimum. Further data collection may be required throughout a Councillor’s term to validate the arrangements in place.

A Councillor’s annual contribution in recognition of the private use component of their Councillor vehicle will be revised and adjusted if necessary, based on logbook data.

SUVs will be fitted with a standard tow-pack acknowledging this is a standard item on this type of vehicle.

Requests for additional equipment or accessories may be made to the General Manager Assets and Environment for review before approval by the CEO. If approved, additional vehicle equipment or accessories will be fitted at the Councillor’s expense. Accessories requiring any structural modification to the vehicle or effecting its roadworthiness or safety systems will not be considered.

A vehicle provided under this category entitles the Councillor and the Councillor’s immediate family to use the vehicle for private use and for the Councillor to perform their role. A copy of the driver’s licence for each Councillor and their nominated alternate driver must be provided.

In the event of a Councillor taking a leave of absence, or when suspended or stood down, they will return their vehicle to a nominated location. Councillors are not required to make a private use vehicle contribution during this time.

Option 2: Council Vehicle, Business Use Only

Provision of a Council vehicle for business use only is to be made available to a Councillor for performing their role only if the cost of that vehicle is determined to be less than their estimated travel reimbursement expenses, representing the lowest cost option. A determination regarding provision of a Council vehicle for business use only requires approval by the CEO with consideration to logbook data and Councillors proximity to Council Fleet vehicles.

A vehicle provided in accordance with this option is for the sole purpose of the Councillor performing their role and must not be used for private purposes. A logbook detailing use must be maintained.

No contribution to vehicle costs is required from a Councillor in accordance with this option.

Option 3: No Vehicle

Where a Councillor does not elect to be provided with a Council vehicle, they are to utilise Council Fleet Pool Vehicles. Where the use of Council Fleet Pool Vehicles is not possible or practical, Councillors may make a claim for reimbursement for use of their own private vehicle for performing their role as a Councillor.

The rate of reimbursement for use of privately-owned vehicles is set at the Australian Taxation Office rate for motor vehicle expenses, based on the cents per kilometre method, adjusted annually.

A claim for private use of privately-owned vehicles must be made in accordance with section 7.8 of this Policy.

9.2 Fines and Infringements

Under no circumstances will Council reimburse or pay the cost of any fine or expenses incurred by the driver of a Council vehicle if that person infringes against road traffic regulations, local laws of any local government with respect to parking restrictions, or any other regulation that relates to the use of vehicles. The onus for the payment of a fine or other cost resides with the offender.

9.3 Servicing and Maintenance

Where a vehicle has been allocated to a Councillor, the Councillor will ensure the vehicle remains in a clean and tidy condition.

It is the Councillor's responsibility to ensure that the vehicles are maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended servicing schedule and remain in a roadworthy condition at all times. This responsibility is limited to ensuring that regular fluid and tyre pressure checks are carried out, vehicle servicing is current, and any obvious tyre, windscreen or other wear or abnormal noises are reported to the Councillor Support Officer.

Councillors will make their own arrangements for servicing of their vehicle with the relevant dealership. Details are provided on the Councillor Vehicle Information Sheet which is located in the glove box.

9.4 Vehicle Breakdown and Accidents

All Councillor vehicle related matters, including breakdowns and accidents, must be reported to the Councillor Support Officer.

Procedures relating to breakdowns and accidents are provided on the Councillor Vehicle Information Sheet found in the glove box of Councillor's vehicles.

In instances where multiple at-fault incidents result in damage to Council vehicles, Councillors may be required to contribute (in each case) up to \$400 to the cost of insurance excess costs. For drivers under the age of 25, the contribution will additionally include any excess that applies above the standard excess nominated in Council's vehicle insurance policy.

9.5 Use of Council Vehicles during the Election Period

During the Election Period, Councillors are not permitted to use Council vehicles in connection with election campaigning, unless a full private use arrangement is in place.

10. Reporting

All reimbursements and expenses paid to or for Councillors or members of a delegated committee will be recorded and categorised as either:

- travel expenses;
- professional development expenses; or
- expenses to support the performance of the role.

Details of all Councillor expenses will be provided to the Audit and Risk Committee quarterly.

A summary of Councillor expenses will be published on Council's website following the report to the Audit and Risk Committee. Councillors can view the report in the Audit and Risk Committee meeting papers.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

The following teams or positions have direct and/or supporting responsibilities associated with this Policy:

Position	Roles and Responsibilities
Councillors	Understand and act in accordance with their responsibilities and compliance with this Policy.
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Advise all Councillors and members of delegated committees of their responsibilities under this Policy. Approve claims for reimbursement of Councillor's out-of-pocket expenses. Approve support, expenses and reimbursements which are not specifically identified in this Policy.
Manager Governance and Regulatory Services	Review the Policy to reflect legislative requirements and best practice for transparency of Councillor expenses and reimbursements of out-of-pocket claims. Provide advice to Councillors regarding support, expenses and out-of-pocket reimbursement.
Councillor Support Officer	Support Councillors to comply with this Policy by providing training and education on completing applications for reimbursement of expenses or professional development opportunities. Provide quarterly reports to the Audit and Risk Committee. Making necessary arrangements for travel, accommodation or professional development. Processing all forms submitted under this Policy for review and approval by the CEO. Advise the CEO of any discrepancies that may occur with claims.
Finance Team	Process reimbursements of expenses for Councillors and members of delegated committees.
Member of a Delegated Committee (who is not a Councillor)	Understand and act in accordance with their responsibilities and comply with this Policy.

12. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Act	Local Government Act 2020.
Chief Executive Officer	The person appointed by a Council under section 44 of the Act to be its Chief Executive Officer or any person acting in that position.
Council	East Gippsland Shire Council.
Councillor	A person who has been elected to the office of “Councillor” of East Gippsland Shire Council.
Delegated committee	The meaning given in the Act.
Council Officer	A current member of East Gippsland Shire Council staff with the authority to engage in activities on behalf of Council.
Shire	The geographic area of East Gippsland Shire Council.
Staff	All staff engaged by East Gippsland Shire Council, including all full-time, part-time, and casual employees, labour hire agency staff and contractors.

13. Human Rights

Council is committed to upholding the Human Rights principles as outlined in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the Charter). This Policy has been assessed as compliant with the obligations and objectives of the Charter.

14. Gender Equality

This Policy has considered the *Gender Equality Act 2020* in its preparation and has been assessed as not requiring an Equity Impact Assessment (EIA) as it does not impact on members of the community.

15. Risk Reference

This Policy is implemented as a control to mitigate risks in the following categories:

Risk Category	✓	Risk Category	✓
Community		Governance and Reputation	✓
Financial		Environment	
People and Property		Service Delivery and Projects	

16. References and Supporting Documents

16.1 Applicable Legislation:

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Carers Recognition Act 2012*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*

16.2 Applicable Policy and Procedure:

- Governance Rules
- Council Representation Policy
- Public Transparency Policy
- Vehicle Policy

16.3 Supporting Documents:

- Local Government Inspectorate Report – Councillor expenses and allowances: equitable treatment and enhanced integrity
- Australian Taxation Office Taxation Determination – Refer Schedule
- Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal – Allowances for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors – Refer Schedule

17. Review and Revision History

Version Number	Date Approved	Approved By	Review Summary
1	25/08/2020	Council	Update to comply with <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and update information relevant to actual practice, including removal of forms in appendix.
2	24/08/2021	Council	Reviewed in relation to <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and Local Government Inspectorate Report – Overview of Councillor support and expenses policy.
3	19/11/2021	CEO	Administrative change approved by CEO to include reference to tow pack for SUVs and 4x4s.
4	08/11/2022	Council	Updated to reflect Councillor Allowances as per the Tribunal outcome and updated Standards of accommodation and meals to reflect ATO allowances
5	16/02/2023	CEO	Remote Travel Allowance clause updated to reflect the increase in allowance, as per LG Remuneration Tribunal advice dated 8 December 2022.

6	07/07/2023	CEO	Administrative updates – Remote Travel Allowance increased to reflect Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal Annual Adjustment Determination 2023 and Standard of accommodation and meals to reflect ATO Determination TD 2023/3
7	16/07/2024	Acting CEO	Administrative updates – Remote Travel Allowance increased to reflect Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal Annual Adjustment Determination 2024 and reasonable meal allowance to reflect ATO Determination TD 2024/3
8	16/09/2025	Council	Full rewrite of Policy
9	09/07/2026	CEO	Administrative updates – Schedule 1 updated to reflect the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal Annual Adjustment Determination 2026, Australian Taxation Office meal allowance rates for 2026–27, and the Australian Taxation Office cents per kilometre rate for motor vehicle expenses.
10	08/09/2026	CEO	Administrative updates – Schedule 1 updated to reflect the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal Allowance payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Determination No. 01/2026, including revised Councillor allowance categories, allowance amounts and Remote Area Travel Allowance rates.

17.1 Administrative Updates

Minor amendments to this document may be required from time to time. Where amendments do not materially alter the intent of a document, they will be made administratively and approved by the Document Owner.

17.2 Document Control Disclaimer

Printed copies of this document are considered uncontrolled. The most current version of this Policy is available on Council's website.

Schedule 1: Allowance Rates for Reimbursement of Expenses

Allowance Type	Rate
Allowances for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal	Effective from 1 July 2026 East Gippsland Shire Council Category 2 (\$ per annum) - Mayor \$ 124,080 - Deputy Mayor \$ 50,388* - Councillors \$ 38,500
Remote Area Travel Allowance Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal	Effective from 1 July 2026 More than 50 km and up to 100 km \$50.60 per day More than 100 km \$101.20 per day Maximum payable: \$6,325 per annum. The allowance may be claimed for each day of travel where attendance at an eligible event requires travel over more than one day.
Meal Allowance Expense Amounts Australian Taxation Office Taxation Determination	Effective from 1 July 2026 High-Cost Country Centres (Bairnsdale) - Breakfast \$36.00 - Lunch \$40.45 - Dinner \$69.00 Other Country Centres - Breakfast \$32.25 - Lunch \$36.80 - Dinner \$63.45 Melbourne or other capital cities - Breakfast \$36.00 - Lunch \$40.45 - Dinner \$69.00
Private Vehicle Use Reimbursement for Travel Australian Taxation Office	Effective from 1 July 2026 91 cents per kilometre for 2026-27

**Note: Transitional arrangements apply for some Deputy Mayors whose term commenced before 31 August 2026. The Tribunal has determined that the current allowance for Deputy Mayors will be retained until the expiry of their current terms.*