

Policy on Taranaki Regional Council Elected Members' Allowances and Recovery of Expenses: For the Electoral Tenure Commencing 12 October 2019

Introduction

This policy sets out rules on the claiming of expenses by elected members and the resources that will be available to them during their term of office.

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Definitions

“Actual” means as evidenced by the original receipt attached to the claim form.

“Reasonable” means that it is within the amount specified by this policy or as deemed reasonable by the Chairperson and/or Chief Executive.

“Council business” includes: formal council meetings, committee meetings, workshops, seminars, statutory hearings, training courses, site visits, meetings with staff, meetings with community groups, meetings with members of the public. It does not include events where the primary focus is on social activity.

“Remuneration Authority” is an independent body established by the *Remuneration Authority Act 1977*, with responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 2002* to determine remuneration and expense/allowance rules for local authority members.

Documentation of Policies

In addition to this document, the following documents set out the policies, rules and procedures relating to the expenses and allowances payable to elected members:

Working for the Taranaki Regional Council
Delegations Manual
Local Government Members (Local Authorities) Determination 2019

Authentication of Expense Reimbursements and Allowances

From time to time elected members incur expenses on the Taranaki Regional Council's (the Council) behalf, which need to be reimbursed. This reimbursement and the use of Council

supplied resources apply only to elected members personally, and only while they are acting in their official capacity as elected members.

The Council pays limited allowances in lieu of expense reimbursements to elected members. All expense reimbursements are for actual and reasonable expenses incurred by Members undertaking Council business. All expenses are to be supported by receipts and tax invoices. In general terms all such Council business is undertaken with the prior approval of the Council given by Council resolution. Expense claims are approved by the Chairperson and processed by senior management. All expenses incurred by Councillors, that reimbursement is to be requested, are to be prudent, conservative and in line with the Auditor-General's guidance on sensitive expenditure as incorporated into the *Working for the Taranaki Regional Council* document.

All reimbursements are made in accordance with the *Working for the Taranaki Regional Council* policy document and the *Delegations Manual*.

Vehicle Provided

No vehicles are provided to Members, other than for the Chairperson, as part of his/her remuneration package approved by the Remuneration Authority.

Mileage Allowances

Mileage allowances will be paid for all travel on approved Council business.

Mileage will be paid up to the maximum rate per kilometre as set out in the current Remuneration Authority Determination.

The allowance payable to a member for eligible travel is:

- (a) for a petrol or diesel vehicle, –
 - (i) 79 cents per kilometre for the first 14,000 kilometres of eligible travel in the determination term; and
 - (ii) 30 cents per kilometre after the first 14,000 kilometres of eligible travel in the determination term:
- (b) for a petrol hybrid vehicle, –
 - (i) 79 cents per kilometre for the first 14,000 kilometres of eligible travel in the determination term; and
 - (ii) 19 cents per kilometre after the first 14,000 kilometres of eligible travel in the determination term:
- (c) for an electric vehicle, –
 - (i) 79 cents per kilometre for the first 14,000 kilometres of eligible travel in the determination term; and
 - (ii) 9 cents per kilometre after the first 14,000 kilometres of eligible travel in the determination term.

The vehicle mileage allowance reflects the kilometre rates, for self-employed people and employees, published by the Inland Revenue Department on its website as at 7 June 2019.

Mileage will be paid to eligible members on receipt of a completed and signed mileage claim.

Mileage is reimbursed for all official Council approved meetings and business. A direct route should be taken in all instances. No mileage is to be reimbursed for electioneering purposes. No travel time allowance is paid.

Travel and Accommodation

Actual and reasonable expenses will be reimbursed for all transport costs associated with Council approved business, including taxis and airport car parking. However, where an elected member undertakes travel on Council approved business, a TaxiCharge Voucher Card should be obtained from Council staff and TaxiCharge partners (Blue Bubble Taxis) used where possible. TaxiCharge Voucher Card costs are paid directly by the Council.

No carparks are provided to Members.

Rental cars will be organised and provided by Council staff, where appropriate, for Members undertaking Council approved business.

Air travel (domestic and international) will be organised and provided by Council staff, where appropriate, for Members undertaking Council approved business. All travel is in economy class unless otherwise approved by the Council.

Koru Club membership is provided by the Council to the Chairperson. Costs of air points, airline clubs etc are not reimbursed by the Council.

Air points belong to the Council where they are received as a result of travel paid for by the Council.

Actual and reasonable expenses will be reimbursed for all accommodation costs associated with Council approved business. Actual and reasonable expenses will be reimbursed for all meals, sustenance and incidental costs associated with Council approved business. Alcohol expenses will be reimbursed in line with the Council policies spelt out in the *Working for the Taranaki Regional Council* document. Where possible, Council staff will organise all accommodation requirements for elected Members at approved accommodation providers where the Council will be charged directly.

No private accommodation is provided to Members.

All expenses incurred by partners/friends/relatives travelling with a Member undertaking Council approved business are the responsibility of the Member. The Council will not reimburse these expenses.

Entertainment and Hospitality

All costs associated with entertainment and hospitality incurred by Members undertaking Council approved business is the responsibility of the Member. The Council will not provide allowances nor reimburse these expenses.

Communications and Technology

A Council owned iPad or equivalent mobile tablet device is provided to Councillors for the purposes of accessing Agendas and conducting Council business. The device remains the property of the Council.

No other communications equipment or technology is provided to Members to undertake Council business. A Council mobile phone is provided to the Chairperson for Council business. All personal costs incurred on that phone are to be reimbursed to the Council in accordance with the policies in the *Working for the Taranaki Regional Council* document.

The equipment requirements for a Councillor include a combination of an iPad, a personal computer and either a hand set or a mobile telephone. While the Council currently supplies an iPad, the personal computer and telephone requirements are the responsibility of individual Councillors. The Council provides an allowance of \$390 per annum for Council-related use of private equipment.

The Council will provide an allowance of \$400 per annum for a contribution to the total cost of a landline and a broadband connection.

The Council will provide an allowance of \$400 per annum to cover the cost of calls, texts and data through mobile phones on Council-related work.

The aforementioned communications allowances (totalling \$1,190 per annum) are paid to elected members at the beginning of each financial year (1 July). Communications allowances are paid pro-rata to an elected member/s should their term with the Council begin part-way through a 12 month period following their election.

Professional Development, Clubs and Associations

The Council will pay for Members to attend professional development courses, conferences and seminars subject to the prior approval of the Council.

No expenses are reimbursed or allowances provided for membership or subscriptions to clubs or associations.

Childcare Allowance

The Council will pay a childcare allowance for local authority elected members who have responsibility for caring for children under the age of 14 years. The allowance is a contribution towards expenses incurred by the elected member for the provision of childcare while the member is engaged on local authority business.

An elected member is eligible to be paid a childcare allowance if:

- they are the parent or guardian of the child, or is a person who usually has responsibility for the day-to-day care of the child (other than on a temporary basis)
- the child is aged under 14 years of age
- the childcare is provided by a person who
 - is not a family member of the member

- does not ordinarily reside with the member
- they provide evidence satisfactory to the council of the amount paid for childcare.

The Council will reimburse eligible elected members for childcare while engaged on council business up to a sum of \$6,000 per annum for each child under 14 year of age.

Other Expense Reimbursements and Allowances

No other expenses are reimbursed or allowances provided to Members.

Taxation of Allowances

No allowances are paid without deduction of withholding tax.