

Travel and Accommodation Policy - Members

MC08-CP (Superseded MC08-CP Travel & Accommodation Policy Members v8)

Hard copies of documents are uncontrolled and may not be current - please refer to the electronic version.



1. Purpose

This document sets out MacDonnell Regional Council (MRC) policy for paying for accommodation and travel for all members of Council Local Authorities and Committees of Council travelling on official Council business.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of Council, Local Authorities and Committees of Council (herein referred to as members).

3. Objectives

This policy is designed to:

- 3.1 outline the Council's responsibilities to reimburse accommodation, travel and incidental expenses;
- 3.2 ensure Council funds are properly used and accounted for;
- 3.3 ensure members are not financially disadvantaged as a result of carrying out their official duties; and
- 3.4 ensure that Council pays all reasonable and approved costs of travel and accommodation expenses (including meals) incurred by members where it is necessary to be away from home to attend legitimate Council business.

4. Statement

4.1 Accommodation and Travel Reimbursement Procedures

- 4.1.1 The Authorising Officer for member payments is the CEO, the Executive Manager Finance and Governance, the Manager Governance or the CEO's delegate in their absence.
- 4.1.2 Members can use their own mode of transport or arrange for the approved use of a Council vehicle in line with Council's Vehicle Policy and management guidelines.
- 4.1.3 For official Council travel, members must contact Council Governance staff to enable a Travel Requisition to be initiated and approved. Note that approval and reimbursement cannot be guaranteed for Travel Requisitions submitted after travel has been completed.
- 4.1.4 The Authorising Officer approving travel, will submit the Travel Requisition to Council's Finance Department for payment.
- 4.1.5 Members must advise of any changes to their initial travel arrangements.
- 4.1.6 If members are absent for the purposes of business they travelled for, or do not attend at all, they must repay any amounts paid to them for the travel through deductions from their next allowance payment. If attendance was at only part of the business travelled for, prepaid reimbursements must be repaid for the non-attendance time.

Travel and Accommodation Policy - Members



MC08-CP (Superseded MC08-CP Travel & Accommodation Policy Members v8)

Hard copies of documents are uncontrolled and may not be current - please refer to the electronic version.

- 4.1.7 If members do not check in for accommodation that has been booked at their request, without due cause, they will need to repay any costs incurred by Council. Repayments will be deducted from future allowance payments made.

4.2 Accommodation Reimbursement

- 4.2.1 Except for emergency situations, accommodation will be prearranged and paid by MRC.
- 4.2.2 Where possible, Council will try to ensure a security deposit is not required on arrival. On some occasions this will not be possible, and members will need to arrange to pay this deposit independently, keep a receipt and seek reimbursement as per 4.5.
- 4.2.3 Incurred Mini-bar, phone, room service, in-house movies and other incidental charges are members' responsibility.
- 4.2.4 Members are responsible for ensuring that any accommodation is maintained to a reasonable standard and are responsible for the financial costs and behaviour of their guests.
- 4.2.5 Council will only cover the cost of accommodation for the member. Any additional cost for family staying with a member, will be at the members own cost. Any costs incurred for damage or additional cleaning will be at the members cost. Council will seek reimbursement of all additional cost and these costs will be automatically deducted from the members next allowance payment.
- 4.2.6 Accommodation for the night before meetings, workshops, training etc. will not be arranged if the member has to travel less than 150km, unless the meeting is starting before 9.45am.

4.3 Meal Allowance

- 4.3.1 Where members are leaving home and returning in the same day on official travel, a breakfast or dinner Meal Allowance is not payable.
- 4.3.2 Where members are travelling overnight, their Meal Allowance accrues from the time they leave home and ceases from the time they arrive home, excluding any time not spent on officially approved business or travel.
- 4.3.3 Meal Allowance is not payable for any meals covered through accommodation or by other parties including meals provided in meetings/conferences.
- 4.3.4 The Meal Allowance, where overnight travel is required, for the expected extra cost of purchasing meals and refreshments shall be as follows:

breakfast	\$34.60
lunch	\$39.00
dinner	\$66.40
	<hr/>
	\$140.00
	<hr/>

- 4.3.5 Any costs for meals and refreshments which exceed the daily amount are the members' responsibility.

Travel and Accommodation Policy - Members

MC08-CP (Superseded MC08-CP Travel & Accommodation Policy Members v8)

Hard copies of documents are uncontrolled and may not be current - please refer to the electronic version.



4.4 Vehicle Allowance for use of a Personal Vehicle

- 4.4.1 Personal vehicles can only be used with the approval of the authorising officer.
- 4.4.2 A **VEHICLE ALLOWANCE** will be paid for use of a personal vehicle for travel on Council business based on mileage travelled by a Member when the travel exceeds 50kms from home (100kms round trip), and is capped at \$10,000 per financial year.
- 4.4.3 The Vehicle Allowance is **ONLY** payable for attendance at Council Workshops/Meetings and meetings approved by Council, such as attendance at meetings of the Australian Local Government Association. Travel for attendance at Local Authority meetings or travel associated with Professional Development is **NOT** included in the Vehicle Allowance cap and will therefore be paid separately as Mileage Reimbursement – see below at Para.4.5.
- 4.4.4 The Vehicle Allowance for kilometres travelled will be based on the shortest possible route by gazetted (or where unavailable, locally recognised) roads, except where that route:
- would involve travel along the Old Ghan Heritage Road between Finke and Titjikala or on the Sandy Blight Junction road between Kintore and Docker River communities; or
 - has been closed by the Northern Territory Roads Department; or
 - has been closed for use by Council vehicles by the MRC Director of Technical Services or the CEO's delegate in their absence.
- In this case the reimbursement will be based on the shortest possible alternative route. Where a member chooses to take a longer route, unless due to the above, reimbursement will be paid on the shorter route.
- 4.4.5 **Vehicle Allowances** will be calculated at the per business kilometre rate set by the ATO (which is subject to change). As an example:
- An elected member travels 450kms to and from a Council meeting.
 - The total kilometres are therefore 900kms.
 - 900kms x \$0.85 (the current rate set by the ATO) = \$765.00.
- 4.4.6 If a member chooses not to stay at their accommodation and travels home each night they will only be paid for one return trip.
- 4.4.7 Members who choose to travel in their own vehicle are not covered by the MRC motor vehicle insurance policy.

4.5 Mileage Reimbursement for use of a Personal Vehicle

- 4.5.1 **MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT** is **ONLY** payable for travel to/from meetings of Local Authorities within the Ward of the Elected Member and will be based on mileage travelled by a Member when the travel exceeds 50kms from home (100kms round trip).
- 4.5.2 Paragraphs **4.4.4, 4.4.5, 4.4.6 and 4.4.7** also apply to Mileage Reimbursements.

4.6 Activity Allowance

- 4.6.1 The Tribunal has recognised that some regional councillors travel long distances to attend meetings and has extended the payment of extra activity allowance to cover travel time while travelling to Council Meetings and Local Authority meetings in its Determination No.1 of 2024. This allowance will be paid to Ordinary Council Members and the Deputy President.

Travel and Accommodation Policy - Members

MC08-CP (Superseded MC08-CP Travel & Accommodation Policy Members v8)

Hard copies of documents are uncontrolled and may not be current - please refer to the electronic version.



4.6.2 The Activity Allowance will be paid as travel time when travelling to and from Council meetings and meetings of Local Authorities within the ward the Councillor represents, where the travel involves at least 50kms from home base (at least 100kms return).

4.6.3 The Activity Allowance is only payable where the maximum Extra Meeting Allowance of \$500 for attendance at a meeting has not been paid. For example:

- Where an elected member travels to attend a Local Authority meeting which only lasts 3 hours the Extra Meeting Allowance will be \$300. Therefore the Activity Allowance payable in this example would be \$200 if the travel involved is at least a 100km return trip.
- Where an elected member travels to attend a Special Council meeting which lasts more than 4 hours the Extra Meeting Allowance will be \$500. Therefore no Activity allowance will be payable.

4.6.4 **The Activity Allowance is NOT included in the Extra Meeting Allowance cap of \$10,000 per year.**

4.7 Incidentals

Council will reimburse, upon presentation of receipts, any approved and reasonable expenses seen as incidental to travel.

4.8 Other travel

Where members are required to travel by air, bus or train on official Council business, MRC will finalise all travel and accommodation payments.

4.9 Payments of Entitlements

4.9.1 Payments relating to attendance at approved meetings

- 50% of the allowances payable for a particular meeting will be paid by electronic transfer before the meeting, with the remainder being paid by electronic transfer at the completion of the final meeting day. This may include the Meal Allowance, Vehicle Allowance and Mileage Reimbursement – depending on the type of meeting.
- The Extra Meeting Allowance and Activity Allowance will be paid in the regular fortnightly payment to Elected Members following their attendance at the meeting.

4.9.2 If members are overpaid, recovery of the overpaid amount will be deducted from the member's next payment.

4.9.3 Members will not be reimbursed where a person chooses to use private accommodation (i.e. family).

Travel and Accommodation Policy - Members



MC08-CP (Superseded MC08-CP Travel & Accommodation Policy Members v8)

Hard copies of documents are uncontrolled and may not be current - please refer to the electronic version.

5. Policy Details

Replaces Policy No: (if applicable)	MC08-CP Travel & Accommodation Policy – Members v8
Responsible Directorate/Department:	Corporate Services - Governance and Planning
Approval Date:	28 June 2024
Minutes Reference and Resolution No:	OCM Item # 15.8 – OCM2024-087
Review Cycle:	June 2025 - Review annually (1) year or after changes to relevant legislation.

6. Legislation and References

Related Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 2019</i> <i>Assembly Members and Statutory Officer (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act 2006</i>
Related Policies	MC03-CP Allowances – Elected Members Policy
Related Procedures	MC01-P2 Travel Expenses Procedure – Members
Related Documents	ATO Taxation Determinations for Meal Allowances and Cents per Kilometre

7. Version Control

Version No.	Approval Date	Policy No.	Minutes reference and Resolution number
1.	26 February 2016	CP109	OCM Item # 13.3 – OCM2016-012
2.	13 December 2019	FA03-CP	OCM Item # 15.7 – OCM2019-145
3.	26 August 2022	MC08-CP	OCM Item # 15.6 – OCM2022-130
4.	26 May 2023	MC08-CP	SCM Item # 19.2 – OCM2023-071
5.	30 June 2023	MC08-CP	OCM Item # 15.3 – OCM2023-093
6.	25 August 2023	MC08-CP	OCM Item # 15.2 – OCM2023-126
7.	27 October 2023	MC08-CP	OCM Item # 15.10 – OCM2023-162
8.	15 December 2023	MC08-CP	OCM Item # 15.14 – OCM2023-196
9.	28 June 2024	MC08-CP	OCM Item # 15.8 – OCM2024-087