

# Travel and Accommodation Policy (Members) v10

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## 1. Legislation

Section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2019* (NT), states that Council may maintain a policy in relation to payment or reimbursement of reasonable expenses for travel and accommodation received by members necessary for:

- (a) attending a meeting of the audit committee, council, council committee or local authority for which the person is a member; or
- (b) attending to business of the council in accordance with a prior resolution of the council.

Council follows the determinations of the Australian Taxation Office when making payments to members to cover food, drink or fuel. Additionally, Council must follow the Northern Territory's Remuneration Tribunal's *Determination of Allowances for Members of Local Government Councils* that outlines how travel-related allowances are paid to members.

The Tribunal is an independent statutory body established under the *Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act 2006* (NT). The Tribunal undertakes inquiries into the remuneration and entitlements of key Northern Territory (NT) office holders and prepares reports and determinations that are tabled in the NT Legislative Assembly.

## 2. Definitions

**Council** means the MacDonnell Regional Council's administration.

**The Council** means the Councillors, President and Deputy President.

**Member** is any person sitting on *the Council*.

**Authorising Officer** for member payments is the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Financial and Information Officer, the Manager Governance or the Chief Executive Officer's delegate in their absence.

## 3. Statement

This policy provides the principles to:

- Ensure Council funds are used properly and accounted for when making travel-related payments to members.
- Ensure members are not financially disadvantaged as a result of carrying out their official duties.

## 4. Policy

### 4.1 Principles

#### 4.1.1 Respect for the Role

Council will support members to carry out their official duties in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

#### 4.1.2 Ensuring Legal Compliance

Allowances and reimbursements are payable by Council in accordance and consistent with the terms and values defined in the determinations of the ATO and Tribunal.

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## 4.2 Travel Reimbursement

- 4.2.1 Members can use their own mode of transport or arrange for the approved use of a Council vehicle in line with the Vehicle Use Policy.
- 4.2.2 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.
- 4.2.3 The Authorising Officer approving travel, will submit the Travel Requisition to Council's Finance Department for payment.
- 4.2.4 Members must advise of any changes to their initial travel arrangements.
- 4.2.5 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.

## 4.3 Accommodation Reimbursement

- 4.3.1 Accommodation will not be provided where the distance travelled from the member's usual place of residence to the meeting venue is less than 50kms.
- 4.3.2 Except for emergency situations, accommodation will be prearranged and paid by Council.
- 4.3.3 Incurred Mini-bar, phone, room service, in-house movies and other incidental charges are members' responsibility.
- 4.3.4 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.
- 4.3.5 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 member's cost. Council will seek reimbursement of all additional costs and these costs will be automatically deducted from the members next allowance payment.
- 4.3.6 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.

## 4.4 Meal Allowance

- 4.4.1 Where members are leaving home and returning in the same day on official travel, a breakfast or dinner Meal Allowance is not payable.
- 4.4.2 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.
- 4.4.3 Meal Allowance is not payable for any meals covered through accommodation or by other parties including meals provided in meetings/conferences.
- 4.4.4 The Meal Allowance rates used are those set by the ATO (which are subject to change). By way of example the rates set by the ATO are as follows:

Breakfast	\$34.75
Lunch	\$39.10
Dinner	\$66.65
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	<b>\$140.50</b>
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- 4.4.5 Any costs for meals and refreshments which exceed the daily amount are the members' responsibility.

## 4.5 Vehicle Allowance for Use of a Personal Vehicle

- 4.5.1 Personal vehicles can only be used with the approval of the authorising officer.
- 4.5.2 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.
- 4.5.3 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 in 4.6. Statements and conditions in 4.5.4 to 4.5.7
- 4.5.4 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:
- 4.5.4.1 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
- 4.5.4.2 Has been closed by the Northern Territory Roads Department; or
- 4.5.4.3 Has been closed for use by Council vehicles by the Transport Infrastructure and Fleet Manager.
- 4.5.4.4 In the above situations 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.
- 4.5.5 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.
  - $900\text{kms} \times \$0.88 = \$792.00$ .
- 4.5.6 If a member chooses not to stay at their accommodation and travels home each night, they will only be paid for one return trip.
- 4.5.7 Members who choose to travel in their own vehicle are not covered by Council's motor vehicle insurance policy.

## 4.6 Mileage Reimbursement for Use of a Personal Vehicle

- 4.6.1 **MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT** is **ONLY** payable for travel to/from meetings of Local Authorities within the ward of the member and will be based on mileage travelled when the travel exceeds 50kms from home (100kms round trip).
- 4.6.2 Statements and conditions in 4.5.4 to 4.5.7 also apply to mileage reimbursements.

## 4.7 Activity Allowance

- 4.7.1 The Tribunal has recognised that there are regional councils that have members who travel long distances to attend meetings. Therefore, the Tribunal has extended the payment of extra activity allowance to cover travel time while travelling to Council meetings and Local Authority meetings. This allowance will be paid to all members with the exception of the President.

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- 4.7.2** 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 member represents, where the travel involves at least 50kms from home base (at least 100kms return).
- 4.7.3** 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.
- 4.7.4** The Activity Allowance is NOT included in the Extra Meeting Allowance cap of \$10,000 per year.

## **4.8 Incidentals**

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

## **4.9 Other travel**

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

## **4.10 Payments of Entitlements**

### **4.10.1 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 members following their attendance at the meeting.

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

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

## **5. Breaches and Consequences**

Action or behaviour that does not comply with any element of this policy can be found to have breached the Code of Conduct. Such action or behaviour must be referred to as 'suspected misconduct' until a decision is made that the action or behaviour amounts to a breach of the Code by a person appointed in accordance with procedure.

## **6. Authority**

*The Council, 19 December 2025*

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## **7. Owner**

Office of the CFIO, Governance and Strategy

## **8. Review Date**

31 December 2028

## **9. Related Documents**

Allowances Policy (Council Members)  
Travel and Accommodation Procedure (Members)  
ATO Taxation Determinations for Meal Allowances and Cents per Kilometre