

Accommodation and Travel – Members

Council Policy 109



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Policy Number	CP109
Area Responsible	Governance and Planning
Strategic Plan Reference	Regional Plan 2017-2021: 4. A Supportive Organisation
Approval date	15/12/2017
Minutes Reference	OCM 15/12/2017 Item 13.2
Last Reviewed	23 February 2018
Next Review Date	February 2022 - <i>Review every four (4) years or after changes to relevant legislation or Council policy.</i>

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:

- outline the Council's responsibilities to reimburse accommodation, travel and incidental expenses;
- ensure Council funds are properly used and accounted for;
- ensure members are not financially disadvantaged as a result of carrying out their official duties; and
- 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 Director of Corporate Services, the Manager – Governance and Planning 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 meal or mileage reimbursement payment. If attendance was at only part of the business travelled for, prepaid reimbursements must be repaid for the non-attendance time.

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- 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 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 Reimbursement

- 4.3.1 Where members are leaving home and returning in the same day on official travel, a meal reimbursement is not payable.
- 4.3.2 Where members are travelling overnight, their meal reimbursement 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 reimbursement is not payable for any meals covered through accommodation or by other parties including meals provided in meetings/conferences.
- 4.3.4 The reimbursement, where overnight travel is required, for the purchase of meals and refreshments shall be as follows:
- 4.3.5 An allowance, where overnight travel is required, for the expected extra cost of purchasing meals and refreshments shall be as follows:

Area 1: MRC region, Alice Springs and Yulara

Area 2: All locations outside of MRC region, Alice Springs and Yulara.

	Area 1	Area 2
<i>Breakfast</i>	20	28
<i>Lunch</i>	25	30
<i>Dinner</i>	45	52
Total	90	110

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

4.4 Mileage Reimbursement

4.4.1 Personal vehicles can only be used with the approval of the authorising officer.

4.4.2 Mileage will be calculated at the highest rate per business kilometre set by the ATO, plus an additional 70% to account for higher fuel prices and greater wear on vehicles in the region, which is set each year.

4.4.3 Reimbursement 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.

4.4.4 If a member chooses not to stay at their accommodation and travels home each night they will only be paid for one return trip.

4.4.5 Members who choose to travel in their own vehicle are not covered by the MRC motor vehicle insurance policy.

4.5 Incidentals

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

4.6 Other travel

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

4.7 Payments of Reimbursements

4.7.1 For two day meetings, 50% of the meal and mileage reimbursement will be paid in cash at the completion of the first day, with the remainder being paid at the completion of day two (or three if the meeting is three days).

4.7.2 For all other meetings, the meal and mileage will be paid in cash at the end of the meeting.

4.7.3 For travel outside the Council region, 50% of the mileage payment will be paid in Alice Springs before departure. Meal reimbursements may be paid fully in advance.

4.7.4 Members may choose to have all due reimbursements paid into their bank account following the meeting.

4.7.5 If members are overpaid, recovery of the overpaid amount will be deducted from the member's next meal or mileage reimbursement payment.

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4.7.6 Members will not receive cash payment for accommodation, nor will any reimbursement be paid where a person chooses to use private accommodation (i.e. family).

5. Legislation and References

Related Legislation	Local Government Act
Related Policies	CP111 Local Authority Policy CP102 Council Code of Conduct CP106 Allowances Elected Members
Related Procedures	
Related Documents	F109 Travel Claim Form F106 Extra Meeting Allowance Claim Official Route Distances Between Communities

6. Delegation and Implementation

Delegate	Director Corporate Services
Implementation Officer	Manager Governance and Planning

7. Administration

EDRMS Doc Id	150265
On Internet	30/5/2017

8. Version Control

Version No	Date Changed	Modified By	Details and Comments
1.0	July 2016	D Teudt	Reviewed
2.0	December 2017	E Brown	Grammatical changes and content updates.
2.1	February 2018	E Brown	Updated staff entitlement for meals and refreshments, based on the area.