Accommodation and Travel – Councillor and Local Authority Members

Council Policy 109

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Number</th>
<th>CP109</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area Responsible</td>
<td>Governance and Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Plan Reference</td>
<td>4.1 Supporting our Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval date</td>
<td>26 August 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes Reference</td>
<td>Resolution 41 – 26 August 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Reviewed</td>
<td>August 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next Review Date</td>
<td>Every Four Years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Purpose**
   
   This document sets out MacDonnell Regional Council (MRC) policy for paying for accommodation and travel for elected Councillors and Local Authority members travelling on official Council business.

2. **Scope**
   
   This policy applies to elected Councillors and Local Authority members travelling on Council Business only.

3. **Policy Objectives**
   
   - To outline the Council’s responsibilities to meet accommodation, travel and incidental expenses.
   - To ensure Council funds are properly used and accounted for.
   - To ensure Councillors/LA members are not financially disadvantaged as a result of carrying out their official duties.

   The Council will pay all reasonable and approved costs of travel and accommodation expenses (including meals) incurred by Councillors/LA members where it is necessary to be away from home to attend legitimate Council business.

4. **Policy Statement**

   **4.1 Accommodation and Travel Reimbursement Procedures**
   
   1. The authorising officer for Councillors/LA members is the CEO, the Director of Corporate Services, the Manager – Governance and Planning or a delegate in their absence.
   2. Councillors/LA 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.
   3. For official Council travel, Councillors/LA members must contact 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. The Authorising Officer approving travel, will submit the Travel Requisition to the Finance department for payment.
   5. Councillors/LA members must advise of any changes to their initial travel arrangements.
   6. If Councillors/LA members are absent for the purposes of business they travelled for, or do not attend at all, they must repay any allowances paid to them for the travel through deductions from their next meal or mileage allowance payment. If attendance was only part of the business travelled for, prepaid allowances must be repaid for their non-attendance time.
7. If Councillors/LA 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 allowances.

4.2 Accommodation Allowance

1. Except for emergency situations, accommodation will be prearranged and paid by MRC.

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 Councillors/LA members will need to arrange to pay this deposit independently.

3. Incurred Mini-bar, phone, room service, in-house movies and other incidental charges are Councillors'/LA members' responsibility.

4. Councillors/LA 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.

5. Accommodation for the night before Council meetings, workshops, training etc. will not be arranged if the Councillor has to travel less than 150km, unless the meeting is starting before 9.45am.

4.3 Meal Allowance

1. Where Councillors/LA members are leaving home and returning in the same day on official travel, meal allowance is not payable.

2. Where Councillors/LA 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.

3. Meal allowance is not payable for any meals covered through accommodation or supplied by other parties including meals provided in meetings/conferences.

4. An allowance, where overnight travel is required, for the purchase of meals and refreshments shall be as follows:
   - Breakfast $19.42
   - Lunch $22.20
   - Dinner $38.26

5. Any costs for meals and refreshments which exceed the daily allowance are the Councillors'/LA members' responsibility.

4.4 Mileage Allowance

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

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.

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 Tjitjikala 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 MacDonnell Regional Council Director of Technical Services or Officer responsible for fleet.

   In which case the reimbursement will be based on the shortest possible alternative route. If a Councillor / LA member chooses to take a longer route, unless due to the above, reimbursement will be paid on the shorter route.
4. If a Councillor/LA member chooses not to stay at their accommodation and travels home each night they will only be paid for one return trip.

5. Councillors/LA members who choose to travel in their own vehicle are not covered by the MRC motor vehicle insurance policy.

4.5 Incidental

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

4.6 Other Travel

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

4.7 Payments of Allowances

1. For two day meetings, 50% of the meal and mileage allowance 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).

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

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

4. Councillors/LA members may choose to have all due allowances paid into their bank account following the meeting.

5. If Councillors/LA members are overpaid, fund recovery will be deducted from the Councillors next meal or mileage allowance payment.

Councillors/LA members will not receive cash payment for accommodation, nor will any allowance be paid where a person chooses to use private accommodation (i.e. family).

5. Legislation and References

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Legislation</th>
<th>Local Government Act (NT) part 7.1 Allowances and Expenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Related Policies</td>
<td>Local Authority Policy, Council Code of Conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated Documents</td>
<td>Travel Claim Form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Delegation and Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Director Corporate Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation Officer</td>
<td>Manager Governance and Planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>InfoXpert file number</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On Internet (Council Policy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Intranet (Operational Policy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>