

Travel Expenses Procedure –members

MC01-P2 Superseding GS02-CP (amendments will be made subject to the enactment of the Local Government Act (General) Regulations and any updated MRC document names)



1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the process in which members will receive payments and reimbursement of reasonable expenses for travel necessary for attending and carrying out their role as members consistent with MC01-CP Members Policy.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to elected member attending, council meetings, local authority meetings and council committees and extra meetings and professional development activities.

3. Definitions

Authorising Officer	CEO, the Director of Corporate Services, the Manager – Governance and Engagement or the CEO's delegate in their absence.
Council business	Council meetings, extra meetings (local authority meetings, council committee meetings, special meetings), professional development and any other.
Members	In this procedure members refers to elected members.
Elected members	Those members elected to MRC.

4. Procedure

4.1. Payment conditions

4.1.1. Travel expenses include any costs with attending council business including:

- a. Accommodation
- b. Meals
- c. Transport
- d. Incidentals

4.1.2. For official council travel, members must contact MRC Governance employees to support the submission of the MC01-F2 Members Travel Requisition Form to be initiated and approved.

4.1.3. The Authorising Officer approving travel, will submit the MC01-F2 Members Travel Requisition Form to MRC's Finance Department for payment.

4.1.4. Members must advise of any changes to their initial travel arrangements.

4.1.5. Where travel arrangements need to be changed or cancelled, the council member must inform MRC as soon as possible to minimise any financial loss to the Council.

4.1.6. Where a member fails to attend all or part of the business for which travel has been organised and paid, the council member is to notify MRC as soon as practicable and provide the CEO with the reason(s) for non-attendance.

4.1.7. The CEO is to report any non-attendance at the next ordinary council meeting and the reasons.

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- a. If the reasons are not accepted by council, they must repay any amounts paid to them for the travel through deductions from their next travel expenses payment.
- b. Travelling council members may be accompanied by a spouse or partner, subject to Council not incurring any additional expense.

5. Accommodation reimbursement

- 5.1. If the member requires accommodation, it will be booked and paid for by MRC. Every effort must be made to ensure that the accommodation cost is at, or below, the amount set by the ATO Taxation Determination for the destination.
 - 5.1.1. If there is no commercial accommodation available and the member is willing to stay at a campsite, MRC will book and pay the campsite fee. Personal procurement of camping equipment remains the responsibility of the member.
- 5.2. Where possible, MRC 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.
- 5.3. Incurred mini-bar, phone, room service, in-house movies and other incidental charges are members' responsibility. 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.
- 5.4. 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.
- 5.5. Accommodation for the night before council business will be booked and paid for if
 - a. the member must travel more than 2 hours and/or
 - b. it begins before 9.45 am
- 5.6. Accommodation after the meeting will be booked and paid for if:
 - a. it finishes after 4pm and/or
 - b. the member must travel more than 2 hours

6. Meal reimbursement

- 6.1. Where members are leaving home and returning in the same day on official travel, a meal reimbursement is not payable.
- 6.2. For council committees, morning tea and lunch is provided, so breakfast and lunch are not claimable on the day of the meeting.
- 6.3. Meal reimbursement is not to be paid when the meal is included in the cost of the meeting, conference or other event.
- 6.4. Where members are travelling overnight, their meal reimbursement accrues from the time they leave home and ceases from the time they arrive home.
 - a. This excludes any time not spent on officially approved business or travel.
- 6.5. The meal reimbursement, is the total costs of meals where overnight travel is required, as per the below table (this table is in line with the ATO Taxation Determination and will be adjusted when it is reviewed):

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Area 1: MRC region, Alice Springs and Yulara

Area 2: All locations outside of Area 1 (MRC region, Alice Springs and Yulara.)

	Area 1		Area 2
	\$20		\$28
Lunch	\$25		\$30
Dinner	\$45		\$52
Total (per day)	\$90		\$110

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

7. Transport

7.1. Mileage reimbursement

- 7.1.1. The principal member (the President) while using their assigned vehicle will not be able to claim mileage as these costs are paid for by MRC.
- 7.1.2. Members may use their personal vehicles provided all relevant laws and regulations are complied with including ensuring the vehicle is roadworthy.
- 7.1.3. Members personal vehicle are not covered by the MRC motor vehicle insurance policy.
- 7.1.4. Members, if they do not have access to a vehicle, may arrange for the approved use of a council vehicle in line with MRC's Vehicle Policy and any other management guidelines (cost per hire commercial rates etc)
- 7.1.5. Traffic infringement notices and fines are the individual responsibility of the driver of the vehicle. Any traffic infringement notices or fines incurred while the vehicle is in control of the member must be paid by the member.
- 7.1.6. Mileage will be calculated at the highest rate per business kilometre set annually 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.
- 7.1.7. Reimbursement for kilometres travelled will be based on the shortest possible route by gazetted road.
- 7.1.8. Exception to item 7.1.7 would occur when the gazetted road has been closed or advice has been given not to travel:
 - a. by the Northern Territory Roads Department; or
 - b. by the MRC Director of Technical Services, the CEO or the CEO's delegate in their absence.
- 7.1.9. In the case of item 7.1.8 the reimbursement will be based on the shortest possible alternative route.
- 7.1.10. If a member chooses not to stay at their accommodation and travels home each night they will only be paid for one return trip.

7.2. Other transport

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7.2.1. Where members are required to travel by air, bus or train on official council business, MRC will finalise all travel and accommodation payments on the member's behalf.

7.2.2. If air travel is to be by the most reasonably economic means available, and shall not include business or first class.

7.2.3. Car rental reservations will be booked and paid by MRC, who will select the most appropriate vehicle (taking into account best value and safety).

8. Incidentals

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

8.2. Council will pay registration fees for any council business attended under the definition of Council business

8.3. If appropriate in the circumstances and in accordance with the approved process, council members may use taxi or rideshare services for council business. Use of taxi or rideshare services will be on a reimbursement basis or in accordance with the Accounting and Finance Policy Manual.

9. Payment method

9.1. For all meetings, 50% of the meal and mileage reimbursement will be paid by electronic transfer, a day before the meeting, with the remainder being paid by electronic transfer at the completion of the final meeting day

9.2. If members are overpaid as per item 4.1.7, recovery of the overpaid amount will be deducted from the member's next payment.

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

10. Procedure Details

Replaces Procedure No: (if applicable)	GS02-CP Allowances - Elected Members Policy
Responsible Directorate/Department:	Corporate Services - Governance and Engagement
Approval Date:	30 April 2021
Minute Reference and Resolution Number:	OCM Item # 15.2 – OC2021-045
Review Cycle:	30 April 2025 - Review every four (4) years or after changes to relevant legislation or Council policy

11. Legislation and References

Related Legislation:	Local Government Act 2019 Local Government (General) Regulations
Related Policies:	MC01-CP Members Policy
Associated Documents:	MC01-F2 Members Travel Requisition Form

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12. Version Control

Version No	Approval Date	Procedure No.	Minutes reference (previous version)
1	30 April 2021	MC01-P2	N/A