Councillors Expense Reimbursement Policy

CONTROL:

Policy Type:	Finance
Authorised by:	Council
Head of Power:	Local Government Regulation 2012 – Section 250
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Responsibilities:	Nil
Adopted / Approved:	21 September 2026; Resolution 2026/199
Last Reviewed:	September 2026
Review:	September 2028 Note: This Policy is reviewed when any of the following occur: 1. The related information is amended or replaced. 2. Other circumstances as determined from time to time by the Chief Executive Officer. Notwithstanding the above, this Policy is to be reviewed at intervals of no more than two years.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that Elected Members receive payment of reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by for discharging their duties and responsibilities as Elected Members and have access to appropriate facilities for that purpose.

1.2 POLICY OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this Policy are to ensure that clear and concise instruction is available for the reimbursement of Elected Member expenses in accordance with the requirements of Local Government Regulation 2012.

1.3 COMMENCEMENT OF POLICY:

This Policy will commence on adoption. It replaces all other specific Councillors Expense Reimbursement Policies of Council (whether written or not).

1.4 SCOPE:

This policy applies to all Elected Members including the Mayor.

2. POLICY

2.1 CONTEXT:

Section 250 of the Local Government Regulation 2012 requires the Council to adopt an Expenses Reimbursement Policy. This Policy complies with the requirement of the legislation and seeks to ensure a clear unambiguous and transparent approach to reimbursement of Elected Member expenses.

2.2 POLICY STATEMENT:

Council will pay or reimburse reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by Elected Members for discharging their duties and responsibilities as Elected Members and provide appropriate facilities for that purpose.

Allowable expenses and facilities to be provided by Council are limited to those authorised by Local Government Regulation 2012 and are compliant with Section 3 of this Policy.

3. STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

3.1 KEY PRINCIPLES

3.1.1 To ensure that all Councillors have the facilities and other support necessary to perform their civic duties and that they are reimbursed for expenses in accordance with this policy.

3.2 CONSIDERATIONS

3.2.1 To ensure compliance with community expectations and statutory requirements relating to the payment or reimbursement of legitimate expenses and provision of facilities for Councillors while carrying out their duties and responsibilities as elected representatives of the Bulloo Shire Council.

3.2.2 Participating in a community group event without formal invitation as a Councillor or being a representative on a Board not associated with Council, is not regarded as Council business.

3.3 SPECIFIC AND STANDARD

3.3.1 Expenses Categories

3.3.1.1 <u>Conferences, Meetings and Workshops</u>

3.3.1.1.1 Where Council resolves that Elected Members are required to attend conferences or workshops to either deliver a paper or as a delegate of Council, Council will meet the cost or reimburse expenses associated with attending the event since participation is part of the business of Council.

3.3.1.2 <u>Mandatory Training</u>

3.3.1.2.1 Where Council resolves that all Elected Members are to attend training courses or workshops for skills development related to the role of an Elected Member Council will meet the cost or reimburse the total costs of the course.

Note: Some examples of this training are Councillor Induction, Code of Conduct, Meeting Procedures and Legislative Obligations.

3.3.1.3 Discretionary Training

3.3.1.3.1 Council will allocate a discretionary training budget for each Elected Member for each term of office. Where Council gives approval for an Elected Member to attend a conference, workshop or training to improve skills relevant to their role as an Elected Member other than mandatory training as above, Council will meet the cost to the maximum allocation of the discretionary training budget for that Member.

3.3.1.3.2 A discretionary training expense limit which does not exceed the Guidelines for Councils – Reimbursement of Expenses and Provision of Facilities, will be set by Council resolution from time to time, as required.

3.3.1.4 Travel Expenses (including taxi and public transport)

3.3.1.4.1 Elected Members may incur travel costs for a number of reasons including attendance at Council meetings, travelling to conferences, training or workshops. In some cases this may involve interstate and overseas travel. If Elected Members travel using their private vehicles a mileage allowance can be claimed based on log book details to substantiate the relevance of the travel to Council business.

3.3.1.4.2 The amount reimbursed will be the actual amount (or equivalent mileage) expended by the Elected Member.

3.3.1.4.3 The mileage allowance will be set by Council resolution from time to time as required. Council will base its determination on the RACV vehicle operating costs as recorded on its web site.

3.3.1.5 Hospitality Expenses

3.3.1.5.1 Elected members may have occasion to incur hospitality expenses while conducting Council business apart from official civic receptions organised by Council. The Mayor, in particular, may require additional reimbursement when entertaining dignitaries outside of official events.

3.3.1.5.2 Council will meet the cost of or reimburse reasonable hospitality expenses to a set maximum per annum.

3.3.1.5.3 Hospitality expense allowances which do not exceed the Guidelines for Councils – Reimbursement of Expenses and Provision of

Facilities, will be set by Council resolution from time to time as required.

3.3.1.6 Accommodation

3.3.1.6.1 Elected Members may need to stay away overnight while attending to Council business. When attending conferences, Elected Members must take advantage of the package provided by conference organisers and therefore stay in the recommended accommodation unless prior approval has been granted by Council.

3.3.1.6.2 In all other cases the Chief Executive Officer will authorise reasonable accommodation arrangements. In these instances, Council will meet the cost of or reimburse legitimate accommodation costs

3.3.1.7 Meals and Incidental Expenses

3.3.1.7.1 Subject to approval, Elected Members may charge costs to Council issued credit cards or claim for the reimbursement of each actual cost per meal when travelling for business related purposes.

3.3.1.7.2 Alternatively, Councillors may be paid a daily meal allowance and incidental expenses based on the Australian Tax Office standards for reasonable travel expenses.

3.3.1.7.3 Allowances which do not exceed the Guidelines for Councils – Reimbursement of Expenses and Provision of Facilities, will be set by Council resolution from time to time, as required.

3.3.1.7.4 Alcohol is excluded from reimbursement.

3.3.2 Reimbursed for expenses incurred for spouses, partners or other family members

3.3.2.1 Spouses, partners and family members of Councillors are not entitled to receive any reimbursement of expenses or provision of Council facilities. The exception is the Mayoress when performing an official duty on behalf of Council.

3.3.2.2 Council will reimburse spouses or partners for travel and accommodation when accompanying Councillors to the Annual LGAQ Conference.

3.3.3 Making Claims

3.3.3.1 When seeking reimbursement for expenses, Elected Members must complete and sign a Reimbursement of Expenses Claim form and provide receipts for allowable expenses together with details of the Council business that the expenses relate to.

3.3.3.2 Expenses claims or reimbursement requests which comply with the requirements of this policy should be forwarded to the Finance Manager. Any Expenses claims or reimbursement requests which do not comply with the requirements of this policy should be referred to Council for determination.

3.3.3.3 Elected Members are responsible for ensuring that they do not make claims in excess of allowable limits.

3.3.4 Provision of Facilities

3.3.4.1 Council will provide and meet operational costs of facilities which are deemed necessary and required to assist Elected Members in their role.

3.3.4.2 When determining the facilities to be provided, Council has considered what are reasonable requirements and standards for an individual Member. If an Elected Member chooses a higher standard of facility than that prescribed by Council, any difference in cost must be met by the Member personally. Ownership of any facilities provided remains with Council.

3.3.4.3 Facilities are to be returned to Council at the end of the Elected Members term.

3.3.5 Administrative Tools and Access to Council Office Amenities

3.3.5.1 Council will provide the following to Elected Members in its office as required:

(a) Facilities such as office space and Council meeting rooms;

(b) Secretarial support for Mayor and Councillors;

(c) Desktop and/or laptop computer and/or IPad;

(d) Use of Council landline telephone and internet access;

(e) Fax and/or scanner;

(f) Printer, photocopier, paper shredder;

(g) Stationery;

(h) Publications – copies of the Act and other legislation, books, journals considered necessary; and

(i) Any other administrative necessities which Council considers necessary to meet the business of Council.

3.3.6 Home Office

3.3.6.1 If Council determines that it is necessary, it will provide an Elected Member with home office equipment, including computer, fax, copier, printer and internet access.

3.3.7 Maintenance Costs of any Council Owned Equipment

3.3.7.1 Council will cover all ongoing maintenance costs associated with Council owned equipment to ensure it is operating for optimal professional use.

3.3.8 Name Badge for Councillor and Uniform

3.3.8.1 Council will provide each Elected Member with a name badge and uniform. This may include any safety equipment such as overalls, safety helmets or glasses as required by an Elected Member in their role.

3.3.9 Vehicle

3.3.9.1 Subject to availability Council will provide a vehicle owned by Council for official business as required. Elected Members are authorised reasonable private use of Council-owned vehicles when on Council business, on the condition that they reimburse Council for any private use at the adopted mileage allowance rate.

3.3.10 Fuel Costs

3.3.10.1 Council will provide fuel, meet the cost of fuel or reimburse the cost of fuel for vehicles provided by Council.

3.3.11 Telecommunication Needs

3.3.11.1 Mobile telephones :

3.3.11.1.1 Where Council resolves to provide a mobile telephone or hand held device to an Elected Member for official business use, Council will pay for all associated costs. Any personal calls made by the Member must be reimbursed to Council.

3.3.11.1.2 If an Elected Member uses a personally owned mobile device, Council will reimburse actual Council business related costs up to 50% of the total costs incurred.

3.3.11.2 Where Council does not provide a mobile telephone or hand held device, Council will provide:

3.3.11.2.1 A home landline at the Member's residence, including connection cost, monthly rental and council will reimburse actual Council business related call costs up to 50% of the total costs incurred. However, any STD or international calls made from the home telephone can only be reimbursed if a receipt and certification is provided by the Elected Member that the call was related to Council business; and

3.3.11.2.2 If "home office" facilities as described above, are not provided by Council, it will meet the cost of home internet access including monthly access fee and up to 50% of the package costs.

3.3.12 Legal Costs and Insurance Cover

3.3.12.1 Council may by resolution, agree to cover costs incurred through any inquiry, investigation, hearing or legal proceedings into the conduct of an Elected Member, or arising out of, or in connection with the Member's performance of his/her civic functions.

3.3.12.2 Members are to be covered under Council's insurance policies while discharging civic duties. Specifically, insurance cover will be provided for public liability, professional indemnity, Councillor's liability, personal accident, international and domestic travel insurance.

4. REFERENCE AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 DEFINITIONS:

To assist in interpretation, the following definitions shall apply:

Word / Term	Definition
Council	means Bulloo Shire Council.

4.2 RELATED POLICIES, LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS:

Links to supporting documentation
Local Government Regulation 2012 – Section 250