

# COUNCILLOR TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION EXPENSES POLICY

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## 1. OBJECTIVE

To establish clear guidelines for travel and accommodation arrangements for Councillors who are required to travel for City business.

## 2. PRINCIPLES

This policy applies to the Mayor and all Councillors of the City of Karratha.

This policy is to provide guidelines as to the eligibility to claim travel and accommodation expenses when attending City related functions, conferences, courses or meetings.

Direct costs of attending approved events generally will be covered by the City. Expenditure incurred of a personal or private nature will not be covered by the City and will be at the cost of the Councillor.

The officer making the booking must ensure that the most competitive rates are utilised when booking airfares and accommodation.

The below procedures may not consider all factors associated with travel and accommodation expenses. In this case, the CEO may determine what is appropriate on a case-by-case basis and such decision remains final.

## 3. POLICY

### 3.1 Approvals

In respect to travel by Councillors, approval must be sought from the CEO in advance of any bookings. The CEO will take into consideration annual allocations provided to Councillors for professional development and available funds remaining for the individual Councillor.

### 3.2 Bookings

The most cost-effective travel arrangements should be considered subject to minimising impact on the personal and work commitments of Councillors. Government rates are to be utilised where available.

The cost of air travel to and from destinations is to be by the shortest most practical route unless additional travel is contemplated before or after official business.

No personal arrangements are to be made by the Executive Assistant / Booking Officer. Councillors are responsible for making their own arrangements with regards to accommodation, car hire etc. for personal use. Councillors who include additional travel other than part of official business and the additional travel is unrelated to the approved travel, must pay the costs, or any difference in the costs, of this additional travel from personal funds.

### **3.2.1 Travel**

This policy only covers direct travel to and from the destination.

#### **Air Travel**

Air travel shall be based on "economy" class of a commercial air carrier. Any upgrade in travel class shall be at the expense of the Councillor. Where a Councillor is booked on a flight (sector) with a duration of 5 hours or longer, they can elect to upgrade to an exit row seat (if available) at the City's expense. Air travel costs will include passenger bookings, departure and arrival taxes where applicable, insurance on cancellations and baggage claims.

The Councillor is responsible for providing the correct information when booking air travel.

Accompanying persons travelling with the Councillor will not be covered by the City. Payment for such persons will be at the cost of the Councillor.

#### **Road Transport**

Where air travel is not available, a City vehicle is to be used to travel to the destination.

Where air travel is an option but the preference is to drive, this arrangement will require approval of the CEO prior to the travel being undertaken. Consideration will be given to the costs of travel, time and accommodation.

Reimbursement of fuel will only be provided for private vehicle usage when a City vehicle is not available. Substantiation of costs is necessary to obtain this reimbursement. No mileage rates will apply in these instances.

In all other circumstances, a hire car can be arranged and may be used only on days when there is City business for distances that require the use of the hire car. The onus is on the Councillor to substantiate why hiring a car may be necessary in circumstances where this may not be clear.

Where a hire car is approved, the Councillor is responsible for ensuring the vehicle is refuelled prior to returning the vehicle to the hire car company. Unless there is a compelling reason, any costs associated with failing to return the vehicle to the hire car company refuelled will be at the Councillor's expense.

### **3.2.2 Accommodation**

Commercial or private accommodation is to be met by the City for those days that the Councillor requires accommodation because the travel cannot be completed in one day.

Where travel requires accommodation, Councillors can advise preferred location in line with prescribed rates.

#### **Commercial Accommodation**

For travel to a major City the maximum rate for accommodation is \$220 per day. For regional travel the maximum rate for accommodation is **\$280** per day. If the accommodation rate exceeds the applicable amount, approval will be required by the CEO to confirm the booking. Where the purpose of the travel is being held at a venue that provides for accommodation, the accommodation shall be booked at that venue at the prevailing government rate.

Subject to relative cost, accommodation should be booked in as close proximity to the function, conference, course or meeting as possible. This ensures that the use of external travel options are minimised. Councillors are encouraged to use public transport or walk to the function, conference, course or meeting wherever possible.

Accompanying persons travelling with the Councillor may be included in the accommodation booking, however if an upgrade is required for additional bedding configurations, the Councillor will be required to reimburse the Council for the cost differential.

### **Private Accommodation**

The daily rate for accommodation involving an overnight stay at private accommodation is \$75.00. This is an allowance provided if the Councillor wishes to stay with family or friends in lieu of commercial accommodation.

### **3.2.3 Meal and Incidentals**

The City will pay for reasonable costs of meal to a maximum of \$115 per day.

Councillors will be reimbursed for costs subject to production of itemised tax receipts. **The indicative guide for rates below can be used as a reference for meal expenses:**

- Breakfast: \$30;
- Lunch: \$30;
- Dinner: \$55.

With the exception of inflight meals, reimbursement will not be available where meals are supplied.

**The City will authorise reimbursement of expenses up to \$20.00 per day without requiring receipts as a daily incidental allowance. As a result, the overall daily allowance for meal costs is adjusted from \$115.00 to \$95.00.**

Additional incidentals including public transport, taxi fares, fuel for hire cars and telephone calls attributable to business purposes will be reimbursed on provision of satisfactory proof of expenditure.

The City will not pay for or reimburse:

- use of mini-bar facility,
- purchase of accommodation services, for example, movies, gym and personal services,
- costs incurred by a third party including any family member or friend travelling with the Councillor.

### **3.3 Additional Travel**

The Councillor will be required to pay any difference in the costs of travel and accommodation arising from the change of dates otherwise than required for the approved travel.

### **3.4 Substantiation of Expenditure**

Documentary evidence including receipts is required from the Councillor for the substantiation of all expenditure within 28 days of returning from travel.

Should fringe benefits tax be incurred by the Council, it shall be borne by the Councillor concerned.

## **4. MISCELLANEOUS**

If the training or conference is cancelled the airfares and accommodation may be cancelled or utilised for other City travel.

If travel duration exceeds seven (7) days in total, the CEO may deem it appropriate to cover the Councillor under a specific travel insurance policy.

## **5. CONSEQUENCES**

This policy represents the formal policy and expected standards of the City of Karratha. Appropriate approvals need to be obtained prior to any deviation from the policy. Councillors are reminded of their obligations under the Council's Code of Conduct to give full effect to the lawful policies, decisions and practices of the City.

## 6. REFERENCES TO RELATED DOCUMENTS

- CG-19-1 Councillor Travel request to attend a Conference or Course
- CG-19-1 Councillor Travel & Accommodation Reimbursement Form
- Code of Conduct

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Responsible Officer:	Director Corporate & Legal Services

*This Policy takes effect from the date of adoption by Council and shall remain valid until it is amended or deleted.*