

Councillor Expenses and Support

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1. Purpose

This document assists Councillors, members of delegated committees, Council staff and the community to understand the entitlements of the Mayor, Councillors and members of Delegated Committees by outlining:

- entitlements for reimbursement of reasonable bona fide out-of- pocket expenses incurred while performing the duties of a Councillor or a member of a delegated committee.
- entitlements to have reasonable bona fide expenses associated with performing the duties of a Councillor or a member of a delegated committee paid on their behalf.
- Councillors’ entitlements to professional development support and resources.
- The facilities, resources and support considered necessary and appropriate for Councillors to perform their duties in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act).

This document also sets out:

- The process and standards for claiming expenses.
- The process and standards for reporting and accountability.

2. Context

Part 2, Division 6 of the Act provides for the payment of allowances; the reimbursement of expenses; and the provision of resources and facilities to the Mayor, Councillors and members of delegated committees for the purpose of supporting them perform their duties.

Councillors and members of delegated committees are entitled, under section 40 of the Act, to reimbursement of expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties.

This policy ensures that the reimbursement of these expenses is in accordance with the Act and meets the Act’s principles of public transparency; achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community; and ensuring the ongoing financial viability of the council.

Section 41 of the Act requires Council to adopt and maintain an expenses policy in relation to the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for Councillors and members of delegated committees.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to the Knox City Council Mayor, Councillors and delegated committee members and specifically addresses a broad range of expenses including:

- Transport and travel;
- Information and Communications Technology
- Conference, seminars, training and professional development;
- Meals and refreshments; and
- Carer Support

This policy is not intended to prescribe for every possible situation that may arise. Any situation that is not adequately covered by this policy will be determined in accordance with section 6.15 or referred to Council for determination by resolution.

Any cost or expense (or portion thereof) which should reasonably be borne by another entity, or for which another entity is reasonably liable, is outside the scope of this policy and shall not be paid or reimbursed by Council.

The payment of allowances for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors is outside of the scope of this policy and will be determined according to the requirements of section 39 of the Act.

4. References

4.1 Community Plan 2021-2031

4.2 Council Plan 2021-2025

Key Direction 5: Civic engagement and integrity

Ensure our processes are transparent and decisions are accountable.

4.3 Relevant Legislation

- Local Government Act 2020
- Carers Recognition Act 2012

4.4 Charter of Human Rights

This policy has been assessed against and complies with the Charter of Human Rights.

4.5 Related Council Policies

- Governance Rules
- Public Transparency Policy
- Councillor Media Policy
- Election Period Policy
- Email, Internet & Web Browsing Policy
- Information Management Security Policy
- Password Policy

5. Definitions

the Act	Means the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> as amended.
Bona fide	Means honest; genuine; actual; authentic; acting without the intention of defrauding.
Carer	Mean a carer as defined under section 4 of the Carers Recognition Act 2012.
Civic function	A ceremonial or celebratory Council event (including reception or ball).
Council	Means Knox City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .
Delegated Committee	Means a Delegated Committee established under section 63 of the Act.
Duties as a Councillor	<p>Means duties performed by a Councillor that are necessary or appropriate for the purposes of achieving the objectives of a Council having regard to any relevant Act, regulations, Ministerial guidelines or Council policies.</p> <p>Such duties include, but are not limited to, attendance at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Meetings, Delegated Committee Meetings, or other committee meetings; • Briefing sessions, workshops, or other meetings with Council staff; • Training sessions, professional development opportunities and conferences (as an attendee and / or speaker) which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are consistent with Council’s objectives; – Will cover or present material with application / importance / relevance to current or future issues faced by the Council; and – Are within the General, or Councillor’s annual budget allocations. • Conferences or other meetings as Council’s nominated representative or delegate. • Civic or ceremonial functions convened or scheduled by the Council, Mayor or Chief Executive Officer; • Meetings with individual community members, organisations and community groups; • Other meetings, inspections or events attended by a Councillor in an official capacity relevant to their duties.
Duties as a Delegated Committee Member	Means duties performed by a member of a Delegated Committee who is not a Councillor, that is necessary or appropriate for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the Committee having regard to any relevant Act, regulations, Ministerial guidelines Instrument of Delegation or Council policy.

Expenses	<p>Means expenses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> initially incurred by a Mayor, Councillor or member of a delegated committee for which a claim is subsequently made for reimbursement; and expenses incurred by Council for or on behalf of a Mayor, Councillor or member of a delegated committee.
Fair and reasonable (in relation to expenses, support and resources)	<p>Means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An amount, level or type that is consistent with what a reasonable person would pay or accept, if they were not a Councillor or member of a delegated committee, in the same or similar circumstances for the same or similar item. An amount that represents value for money and minimises waste or extravagance
Material cost	<p>Means a cost greater than 10% of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> total once-off expense incurred; or monthly expense incurred.
Professional development	<p>Means the process of improving and increasing the capabilities, knowledge, mindset or skillset of councillors through access to education and training opportunities, whether through outside organisations or in the workplace.</p>
Reasonable personal use	<p>Means personal use that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is infrequent and brief, and/or does not have a cost to Council, or a material cost to Council in the context of the expense in question. does not interfere with the operation of Council. does not unreasonably interfere with another councillor's use of Council's resources and facilities. does not compromise the security of the Council's systems or assets. does not impact on Council's electronic storage capacity. does not decrease Council's network performance, or consume bandwidth or data in a manner that could interfere with the service provided to others (e.g. large email attachments can decrease system performance and potentially cause system outages; streaming content can consume large amounts of bandwidth on Council's network, or data from Council's mobile plan). corresponds to Council's procedures for email maintenance and archiving documents. is not an unacceptable use, as defined.
Representing Council	<p>Representing Council means external-facing responsibilities focused on promoting Council's interests and position; or where Council receives an official invitation seeking Council representation at an event</p>

<p>Term of office</p>	<p>In accordance with Section 29 of the Local Government Act 2020, the term of office of a Councillor elected at a general election commences on the day that the Councillor takes the Oath or affirmation of Office and expires at 6.00am on the day appointed for the next general election.</p> <p>In terms of this policy, the term of office for any Councillor elected as a result of an extraordinary vacancy expires at 6.00am on the day appointed for the next general election.</p>
<p>Tools of trade</p>	<p>Includes the following items of information and communications technology equipment provided to conduct business as a Councillor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laptop and or Tablet Computer • Printer/Copier/Facsimile/Scanner • Mobile Communication Device (eg Smartphone)
<p>Unacceptable use</p>	<p>Means use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create or exchange messages that are offensive, harassing, obscene or threatening. • To visit web sites containing objectionable (including pornographic) or criminal material. • To store publish or transmit material that is offensive, obscene, abusive, defamatory or unlawful. • That exchanges any confidential or sensitive information contrary to law. • That infringes intellectual property laws. • That transmits files or viruses that cause a negative impact on Council’s computer system. • Of software that is unauthorised. • That is for electioneering purposes or any other purpose prohibited by law.

6. Council Policy

6.1.1. Policy Principles

The following principles represent the foundation of Council’s Policy on payment or the reimbursement of expenses for the Mayor, Councillors and delegated committee members. The following principles also represent the foundation of Council’s Policy on the provision of resources and facilities to support the Mayor and Councillors:

- Public resources will be used prudently and solely in the public interest, in accordance with the Councillor Conduct principles as prescribed in the Act.
- Public resources will be allocated in a fair and equitable manner taking into account individual needs and circumstances, to facilitate the full participation of all Councillors.
- The provision of support and resources, and the reimbursement of expenses must be accountable and transparent to the community.
- Expenses must be:
 - Fair, reasonable and bona fide;

- actually incurred in the performance and discharge of a Councillor's or delegated committee member's duties;
 - adequately substantiated; and
 - in accordance with statutory requirements and community expectations.
- Support and resources provided must be:
 - fair and reasonable;
 - reasonably necessary to meet the legitimate needs of Councillors when performing their duties; and
 - in accordance with statutory requirements and community expectations.
- Councillors must reimburse Council for any costs incurred which relate to personal use which is not specifically authorised in this Policy.
- Council will provide reasonable additional support, facilities and/ or equipment for any Councillor with a disability to enable them to perform their duties.

6.2. Transport and travel

6.2.1. General Provisions

The following general provisions shall apply when determining any expenses to be met or reimbursed by Council:

- Subject to section 6.5.1 interstate or overseas travel expenses must be applied for, and approved by Council resolution, in advance of the travel occurring.
- Expenses will only be met or reimbursed by Council where undertaking the duties of a Councillor is the primary and predominate purpose of travel.
- Travel shall be by the most practical mode and route possible, and be reasonable in the circumstances taking into account factors such as duration and total cost of travel.
- Costs should be minimised by sharing travel arrangements where reasonable and practicable.
- The amount paid or reimbursed by Council for air travel shall not exceed the cost of economy class air travel to the relevant destination.
- Where private travel is undertaken in conjunction with travel related to the duties of a Councillor:
 - All costs incurred for private purposes must be clearly delineated and documented pre-departure.
 - Council will not directly pay for or reimburse any costs related to private travel.
- The quantum of expenses met or reimbursed by Council will generally be on the basis of the actual cost incurred and the form of transport used. However, Council may reimburse an amount less than the amount claimed, where the actual expense incurred is considered unreasonable, taking into account for example, the alternative models of travel available.

- Council will not reimburse expenses for travel to Council or Delegated Committee meetings, meetings of Council committees, formal briefing sessions and civic and ceremonial functions.

6.2.2. Mayoral Vehicle

A fully maintained motor vehicle will be made available to the Mayor for the duration of their term, including for reasonable personal use.

The make and model of vehicle will be determined in accordance with Council Policy or at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.

Reserved parking will be provided for the Mayoral Vehicle at the Civic Centre.

6.2.3. Private Vehicle Use

Councillors and members of a delegated committee using their own private vehicles to carry out their duties as a Councillor or a delegated committee member may be reimbursed travel expenses. Reimbursement shall be on a per-kilometre basis at the rate prescribed for deductions for work-related car expenses by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) using the cents per kilometre method.

Where a Councillor or delegated committee member uses a car for interstate travel in accordance with this policy, the amount paid or reimbursed by Council to undertake the interstate travel (inclusive of tolls, car parking and additional accommodation costs) shall not exceed the cost of economy class air travel and transfers to the relevant destination.

Parking will be provided for Councillors' private vehicles at the Civic Centre.

6.2.4. Council Vehicle Use

In exceptional circumstances, where practicable and by prior arrangement through the Chief Executive Officer, a Council pool vehicle may be made available for use by a Councillor where use of a private vehicle or other means of transport is not available or convenient.

All use of Council pool vehicles must be reasonably necessary to discharge the duties of a Councillor and pool vehicles may not be used for personal use.

Council does not have an allocated pool vehicle for use by Councillors and availability of vehicles is subject to operational demands upon the fleet.

Any Councillor use of Council pool vehicles is subject to relevant Council policies and procedures.

6.2.5. Tolls and Car Parking Costs

Councillors and delegated committee members may be reimbursed for the cost of:

- Car parking for the reasonable duration required to perform their duties.
- Fees for use of toll roads (EastLink and CityLink) incurred in attending to their duties.

The most value for money parking options should be sought. Where premium, valet or personalised parking services are used, the amount paid or reimbursed by Council shall not exceed the cost of standard parking facilities available in reasonable proximity.

6.2.6. Public Transport

Councillors and delegated committee members may be reimbursed for the cost of using public transport incurred in attending to their duties as a Councillor.

6.2.7. Taxi Costs (including ride share and other fare based services)

Where it is not practicable or cost effective to use public transport, a Council or private motor vehicle, Councillors and delegated committee members may be reimbursed for taxi costs incurred in attending to their duties.

Where a Councillor or a delegated committee member uses a ride share service or other service providing a vehicle and driver, the amount paid or reimbursed by Council shall not exceed the cost of an equivalent taxi service.

Councillors may request a “Cab-Charge” voucher from Council for the payment of taxi services.

6.2.8. Overseas Travel

Overseas travel expenses will only be incurred or reimbursed in accordance with a specific Council resolution made prior to the travel being undertaken.

Expenses relating to overseas travel, accommodation, meals and reasonable entertainment will be met or reimbursed by Council in accordance with the resolution.

6.2.9. Exclusions

Council will not directly pay for, or reimburse, the costs of any infringements incurred, including:

- For road, traffic or parking offences.
- For public transport offences.

6.2.10. Travel Expenses not covered by the foregoing.

Where travel expenses are proposed to be incurred outside this section or there is doubt as to the application of this section to expenses incurred, then the provisions of section 6.15 of this Policy can be applied.

6.3. Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

6.3.1. Selection and Provision of Councillors’ ICT Equipment

The following tools of trade will be made available to each Councillor to assist them perform their duties as a Councillor:

- one mobile telephone: Wi-Fi and mobile data (ie 3G, 4G, or 5G) enabled with a voice mail or voice to text service.
- one mobile tablet or laptop computer: Wi-Fi and mobile data (ie 3G, 4G, or 5G) enabled.
- one multi-function copier/printer/scanner – if requested. One replacement set of toner cartridges will be provided upon request per Council term.
- monitor with a second monitor available on request.
- headphones suitable for tablet / laptop based MS Teams and Zoom meetings.

The capital costs of Councillors’ tools of trade are not an expense for the purposes of this policy.

Council will directly pay for the expenses associated with providing a mobile data plan for tools of trade through plans established periodically according to Council's usual procurement processes.

The make, model, and functionality of Councillors' tools of trade will be subject to consultation with Councillors, but will otherwise:

- Be selected in accordance with Council's ICT strategy and the usual standards and processes applied across Council for its business activities;
- Not exceed, nor be less than, the standard or specifications of equipment available to staff (including Directors and the Chief Executive Officer);
- Be consistent across the Councillor group to enable more efficient training, support and asset management;
- Be reviewed at the commencement of each electoral term; and
- Be upgraded at the end of their useful life or otherwise in accordance with Council's ICT strategy and the usual standards and processes applied across Council for its business activities.

Where a reasonable mobile data (ie 3G, 4G, 5G) connection cannot be accessed at a Councillor's normal place of residence, expenses for an alternative solution can be considered in accordance with section 6.15 of this Policy.

6.3.2. Selection and Installation of ICT Software

Councillors' tools of trade will be equipped with a range of approved software. Software selected will be subject to consultation with Councillors, but will otherwise be selected and upgraded in accordance with Council's ICT strategy and the usual standards, processes and security safeguards applied across Council's network.

The installation of additional software on Councillor tools of trade is subject to consultation with the IT Department.

Councillors must not load pirated, suspect or illegal software or content onto any Council provided device. Council has the right to audit a tool of trade, including applications and information, to ensure compliance with the law and this policy. The Chief Executive Officer has the authority to delete any inappropriate information or unauthorised software from a Council provided tool of trade.

The cost of approved software selected and made available to all Councillors is not considered an expense for the purposes of this policy.

6.3.3. Use of ICT Equipment

Councillors must maintain the integrity and the configuration of the tools of trade provided, protect and generally ensure the safe custody and operation of such equipment and the information they contain.

Councillors' tools of trade are to be used for their duties as a Councillor, however reasonable personal use (as defined) of Councillors' tools of trade is permissible. Councillors' tools of trade must not be used to conduct personal business or other unacceptable uses.

Councillors should take all reasonable steps to ensure that Council provided tools of trade are not used in breach of this policy by third parties.

Councillors will be provided an opportunity to review the costs associated with their tools of trade at regular intervals, in order to identify and reimburse Council for private usage which is beyond reasonable personal use.

6.3.4. International Roaming

Councillors travelling overseas travel in accordance with section 6.2.8 may have international roaming provisioned on their tools of trade for the duration of the trip in accordance with Council's resolution.

International use of tools of trade in all other circumstances requires approval of the Chief Executive Officer prior to departure and the quantum of expense to be met or reimbursed by Council shall be limited to \$100 per Councillor per 4 week period.

6.3.5. User Accounts and Data

Councillors will be provided a user account enabling access to:

- Their tools of trade and any associated local, network, or cloud based storage.
- An email account on Council's @Knox.vic.gov.au domain.
- Software provided in accordance with section 0.
- Other data and resources relevant to their duties as a Councillors.

Councillors' use of the accounts and data provided via their tools of trade (or any other method) are subject to the various codes, policies and procedures set out Section 4.

Council will typically provide personalised user accounts and avoid generic (ie ward based) accounts to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of Councillors' data following the end of a Councillor's term of office.

6.3.6. Damage, Loss or Theft of Equipment

Any damage sustained to Councillors' tools of trade will be repaired at Council's expense. Device covers are highly recommended and may be supplied by Council.

Where a mobile device is damaged, lost or stolen a Councillor must:

- report the damage, loss or theft to the Information Technology Team as soon as practicable; and
- where requested, provide a Statutory Declaration including the details of the device and the circumstances of the damage, loss or theft.

All stolen or lost tools of trade will be subject to a remote wipe by Council.

6.3.7. Return of Councillor Equipment

All Councillor equipment must be returned to Council:

- upon request; and or
- at the conclusion of a Councillors' term of office.

Council staff will take appropriate steps to remove / destroy any data stored on Councillor equipment that is returned, before it is disposed of or re-deployed.

6.3.8. Disposal of Redundant Councillor Equipment

Councillors will be provided with an opportunity to purchase (at market value) the tools of trade that have been provided to, and used by them, if they are determined by the Director Customer and Performance to be redundant or additional to Council's needs.

Any equipment purchased must be returned to Council beforehand, to enable corporate software and personal information to be removed, in accordance with section 6.3.7.

Tools of trade are not considered redundant or surplus to Council's needs if they:

- are of a type and specification still being procured or deployed for use by Council; and/or
- are of a type and specification that are appropriate to retain for redeployment to other Councillors or staff members, Council programs or activities.

Equipment that remains relevant and useful to Council's needs will not be made available to Councillors for purchase.

The market value of any tools of trade to be sold in accordance with this section will be determined by the Director Customer and Performance; having regard to contemporary market rates for the sale or trade-in value of such equipment. Records of how the market value(s) was determined will be maintained by the Director Customer and Performance.

Once notified of the opportunity to purchase the equipment and the market value, a Councillor must inform Council of their intent to purchase or not within 7 days.

Any equipment not purchased must be returned to Council promptly in accordance with a notification from the Director Customer and Performance.

6.3.9. Transfer of mobile telephone number

A Councillor wanting to retain their Council owned mobile telephone number at the conclusion of may request the number be transferred to them.

Any associated costs in the transfer and any fees or charges incurred at this time and after will be met by the Councillor wanting to transfer the number.

6.4. Conferences, Seminars, Training and Professional Development

6.4.1. General Provisions

Council recognises the need for Councillors to attend training, conferences, seminars and professional development activities in order to be kept informed on relevant local government matters and to assist them performing their roles as Councillors. Generally, and as defined in this Policy, professional development means the process of improving and increasing the capabilities, knowledge, mindset or skillset of Councillors.

Annual budget provisions for conferences, seminars, training and professional development are addressed in Section 6.4.2.

Prior approval to attend the training and development activity must have been obtained from either the Chief Executive Officer or resolution of Council for expenses to be paid or reimbursed to Councillors.

The expenses paid or reimbursed to Councillors may include:

- 6.4.1.1 registration fees.

6.4.1.2 accommodation costs other than in the metropolitan area.

6.4.1.3 reasonable cost of meals and refreshments.

Where appropriate, Councillors will present a short synopsis of the event (written or verbal) at the next practicable Council meeting as part of their monthly Councillor report, following attendance at a conference, seminar, training or professional development.

Conferences, training or professional development conducted or delivered by Council staff are not considered expenses for the purposes of this policy, (including the cost of ancillary meals and refreshments including in accordance with Section 6.8).

A delegated committee member may have training and professional development expenses paid or reimbursed by Council in accordance with a specific Council resolution made prior to the training or activity being undertaken.

Expenses relating to registration fees, accommodation and meals will be met or reimbursed by Council in accordance with the resolution.

6.4.2. Annual Budget Allocation for Conferences, Seminars, Training, Professional Development and Representation

Subject to consideration and approval of the annual Council budget, an allocation for Conferences, Seminars, Training, Professional Development and Representation of:

- \$5,500 will be made in respect of each Councillor;
- \$7,000 for the Deputy Mayor; and
- \$11,000 for the Mayor;

for use within a given mayoral year at the discretion of the individual Councillor. Allocations are not cumulative as between mayoral years.

6.4.3. Accommodation and Meals at Conferences, Seminars, Training and Professional Development

Where it is understood that a Councillor training and development activity involves related costs, such as accommodation or meals, these should be identified prior to registration.

If not included in the cost of the registration, the cost of meals and beverages (within reasonable limits) for the duration of the training and development activity may be reimbursed to Councillors and delegated committee members.

Appropriate accommodation, as selected by the Chief Executive Officer or delegate, for the duration of the training and development activity may be paid by Council. Accommodation expenses within the metropolitan Melbourne area will not be paid or reimbursed to Councillors or delegated committee members.

Accommodation and meal expenses should be consistent with Table 3 in the annual determinations of the Australian Taxation Office regarding reasonable accommodation and meal expenses (See for example Taxation Determination TD 2023/3 included at Appendix 1, or subsequent determinations as circulated to Councillors from time to time.)

6.4.4. Councillor Induction and sector training

A mandatory induction and training program will be conducted for all Councillors at the commencement of each electoral term. Periodically throughout the Councillors' terms of office, Councillors will also have access to program of training and professional development opportunities including:

- 6.4.1.1 Meeting procedures
- 6.4.1.2 Chairing of meetings
- 6.4.1.3 Media training
- 6.4.1.4 Governance training (for example, Australian Institute of Company Directors course)
- 6.4.1.5 Financial training
- 6.4.1.6 Information Technology usage
- 6.4.1.7 Team Building and interpersonal skills
- 6.4.1.8 MAV/VLGA Councillor Development Programs
- 6.4.1.9 Cranlana Colloquium

- An allocation for these expenses will be made, subject to consideration and approval in the annual Council budget.
- A Councillor's entitlement to have met or reimbursed the cost of undertaking the Australian Institute of Company Directors', Company Directors Course is subject to and conditional upon the course commencing prior to the calendar year in which a general election is to be held.
- Additional training and professional activities outside of the above program must be funded separately as an expense from individual Councillor budget allocations in accordance with Section 6.4.2.
- A Councillor who is not entitled (or seeking) to be reimbursed for attending the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) in accordance with Section 6.5.1, may fund their attendance at the NGA from their individual Councillor training and development budgets. (For the purposes of this section, the costs of attending the NGA shall include all registration, travel, meals, accommodation and incidental expenses).

6.5. Representing Council

6.5.1. Attendance at the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA)

The Mayor and up to three additional Councillors are entitled under this section to have met or reimbursed, the costs for attending and representing Council at the Annual National General Assembly of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), which provides Councils with the opportunity to participate and engage in advocacy and discussion on matters of national importance to local government.

Where more than three Councillors, other than the Mayor, wish to claim an entitlement under this section, the Mayor shall consult with Councillors seeking to reduce the number of Councillor delegates to four. Priority will be given to Councillors who have not previously attended the NGA in the current term of Council. Where, following consultation with the Mayor, more than four Councillors wish to claim an entitlement under this section, the matter shall be referred to Council for determination.

The total cost for attending the NGA (excluding meals and transport costs) under this section shall not be deducted from individual Councillors' Conference, Seminar and Representation Expenses entitlement.

At the request of the Mayor, and subject to available budget provisions, the Councillor delegation to the NGA may be supported (at Council's expense) by the Chief Executive Officer or another member of the Executive Leadership Team.

6.5.2. Attendance at Fundraising and Charitable Events

Council will directly pay for or reimburse the cost of ticketed events for Councillors invited, in their role as a Councillor, by written invitation to attend Fundraising or Charitable Events:

- a) Conducted by a neighbouring municipality, or municipality in the Municipal Association of Victoria's Metropolitan East Region; or
- b) Where prior approval has been given by Council, or the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor (or in the case of Mayoral expenses, the Deputy Mayor), and the event benefits the Knox Community.

6.5.3. Appointments to External Organisations

Each year, and from time to time, Council resolves to appoint Councillors to represent it on a number of external organisations.

For these organisations the nominated Councillors or their substitute are to be Council representatives at regular meetings of these organisations and any special events, with partners where appropriate.

Councillors are entitled to have paid by Council, or reimbursed, reasonable bona fide costs associated with representing Council on such organisations subject to expenditure in excess of \$500 per annum per delegate (including substitute nominees) per organisation being approved in advance by Council.

6.6. Attendance by a Councillor's Spouse or Partner

6.6.1. Attendance at Functions of Victorian Councils

Where there is a mutual expectation of partners attending, Council will directly pay for or reimburse the reasonable costs of a Councillor's spouse or partner attending functions:

- a) held by Knox City Council; or
- b) held by other Victorian municipalities

A mutual expectation of partners attending would arise for example where:

- A spouse / partner is specified on the invitation; and
- The event is a dance, ball, or gala, to which a partner would typically be invited; or
- The event is of a nature where other attendees will be accompanied by partners.

6.6.2. Attendance at other seminars, conferences or civic functions

Attendance at any seminar, conference or civic function by a councillor's spouse / partner shall be at the expense of the councillor except where:

- a) Prior approval has been given by Council or the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor (or in the case of Mayoral expenses, the Deputy Mayor); and
- b) Attendance by a councillor's spouse / partner is considered to be necessary or appropriate to support the business or representational needs of Council; and

- c) Sufficient provision exists in the approved annual budget for conferences and seminars.

In order to effectively manage GST liability – all arrangements for a Councillor’s spouse or partner’s attendance may be requested to be paid for by the Councillor, with reimbursement provided by Council.

6.7. Other Support

Where a Councillor attends an event on behalf of Council, the following support can be provided when required and as follows:

- Administrative support managing invitations and RSVPs provided by the Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Councillors.
- Provision of talking points for the Mayor (or delegate), for events where a formal invitation is received to attend and speak.
- Providing background information for Councillors attending other events if requested.
- Support associated with the wearing (and security of) of the Mayoral Robes and Chain for events where formal attire is considered necessary and appropriate.
- Taking photos of Councillors (using Councillor’s devices) at events on request, provided such requests are incidental to, and not disruptive to the officer’s role at the event.

6.8. Meals and Refreshment

6.8.1. General Provisions

Council will provide reasonable meals (typically either a buffet style meal or plated meal) during evenings of Council meetings, Delegated Committee meetings, Issues Briefings and other key meetings as determined by the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor.

Reasonable meals may also be provided when other Council events or meetings are held at times that immediately follow or extend through normal mealtimes.

Council will provide reasonable refreshments for Councillors’ in their office and meeting space.

6.8.2. Alcohol

Where this policy makes allowance for refreshments or meals for the Mayor, Councillors or Committee members, in the absence of a prior resolution of Council, the cost of alcoholic beverages shall not be met or reimbursed as an expense except:

- Where they cannot be reasonably avoided (such as where alcoholic beverages are included as part of the ticket price of an event or function.)
- Where the Chief Executive Officer has determined the provision of alcoholic beverages is appropriate at a Knox City Council civic or other function involving members of the community, having regard to:
 - The nature and purpose of the function.
 - Community expectation and the policy principles set out in section 6.1.1.

- The impact alcohol can have on the safe, competent and professional performance of the duties of a Councillor, or other attendees.

6.9. Carer Support

Council will directly pay for, or reimburse fair and reasonable childcare / family care expenses incurred by Councillors whilst discharging their duties as a councillor. The total expense paid for, or reimbursed, by Council must exclude any applicable rebates or subsidies.

Council will directly pay for, or reimburse fair and reasonable childcare / family care expenses incurred by a delegated committee member whilst discharging their duties as a member of a delegated committee. The total expense paid for, or reimbursed, by Council must exclude any applicable rebates or subsidies.

Family care relates to care provided to any immediate family member who is either a child or a sick, elderly, or disabled person. A child is defined as a person up to, but not including, 16 years of age.

Council may also make reasonable adjustments, and directly pay for or reimburse fair and reasonable additional expenses incurred by a Councillor who is breastfeeding.

Eligible care does not include care performed by a direct relative (spouse, domestic partner, son, daughter, mother, father, brother or sister of the Councillor or their spouse or partner).

Council will provide reimbursement of costs where the provision of carer services is reasonably required when a councillor or delegated committee member who is a carer incurs reasonable expenses in the performance of their duties.

Each claim must be substantiated by a receipt from the caregiver showing the dates and times care was provided and a written statement identifying the duty performed by the Councillor.

6.10. Professional Memberships

Council will directly pay for, or reimburse the cost of the following memberships:

- Australian Institute of Company Directors
- The Victorian Local Government Association
- The Australian Local Government Women's Association

Other memberships, which are considered demonstrably beneficial to Council or the performance of the duties of a Councillor, may be considered in accordance with section 6.15 of this Policy.

6.11. Subscriptions

Councillors can access The Age newspaper as part of a Your Library Membership.

Council will directly pay for, or reimburse the cost of a subscription to The Herald Sun newspaper.

Other subscriptions may be considered in accordance with section 6.15 of this Policy.

6.12. Miscellaneous Support and Expenses

All Councillors will be provided with:

- Standard stationery and office consumables held or obtained generally for the organisations requirements.
- Personalised business cards.
- Names badges, including for a spouse or partner.
- A page on Council’s website including, but not limited to, a photo, contact details, term dates and committees. Additional information may be included at the request of individual Councillors, subject to approval by the Chief Executive Officer.
- Any safety equipment required for a Councillor’s duties. This equipment is to be returned to the organisation promptly upon the completion of the activity/duty for which the articles were required.
- Council business papers, personal mail and other Council information will be couriered to Councillors’ place of residence weekly or as required.

The Chief Executive Officer shall also provide an appropriate level of secretarial/administrative support for the Mayor and Councillors.

6.12.1. Donations and/or sponsorship

Donations and/or sponsorship made by a Councillor will be made on their own behalf and not on behalf of Council, except in accordance with a prior resolution of Council.

Councillor donations and/or sponsorship not in accordance with a prior resolution of Council will not be reimbursed by Council.

6.12.2. Insurance Policies

Councillors and delegated committee members are covered under the following Council insurance policies while discharging, in good faith, the duties of civic office including attendance at meetings of external bodies as Council representatives:

- Public Liability Insurance;
- Professional indemnity Insurance;
- Councillors and Officers liability Insurance;
- Personal Accident (accompanying partners are also covered) Insurance;
- Travel Insurance; and
- Work Cover (as a deemed employee).

The insurance does not cover criminal or willful acts.

The Council will pay the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim made against a Councillor or member of a delegated committee arising from Council business where any claim is accepted by Council's insurers, whether defended or not.

6.12.3. Legal Expenses

Other than by specific Council resolution, any legal expenses incurred by a Councillor shall be the responsibility of that Councillor.

6.12.4. People Assist Program

Council provides a People Assist Program to staff which is also available for use by Councillors. The program provides professional and confidential support services for personal or work related issues for Councillors and their immediate family at no cost.

Councillors can access the People Assist Program for up to four free hours, per issue.

6.13. Office and Meeting Space

At the Civic Centre there shall be provided:

- A Mayoral Office
- A separate, shared office space provided for use by Councillors
- A Councillors' Room.

All spaces will be determined by the Chief Executive (in consultation with Councillors) and suitably equipped for computer use, photocopying, reading, research and meetings.

Councillors will be provided with 24 hour security access to the Councillors' Room and shared office space. The Mayor shall have 24 hour security access to the Mayoral Office.

Subject to availability, other Council meeting/function rooms owned and controlled by Council may be booked by Councillors for use free of charge for meetings and other functions, provided the Councillor is in attendance and the use is necessary or appropriate for performing the duties of a Councillor or the conduct of Council business.

6.14. Ward Meetings

An annual budget provision will be made (and reviewed annually as part of the Council budget process) for the reasonable costs associated with holding one Ward Meeting per calendar year.

6.14.1. General Provisions

Ward Meetings are conducted as an informal feedback session for the benefit of Councillors. It is not intended that detailed information be provided by staff on the progress of projects or upcoming projects.

Ward meetings are held at the discretion of individual Councillors who are responsible for setting the agenda, preparing relevant content and conducting their Ward meetings.

Councillors are requested to indicate their intention to hold Ward Meetings at the commencement of each calendar year.

Ward meetings may be held at the Civic Offices, or at a convenient location within the Ward as selected by the Councillor.

Refreshments provided shall be limited to tea, coffee and biscuits.

Ward meetings will not be held during an election period.

6.14.2. Staff Attendance

Council staff typically do not participate in Ward Meetings.

At the request of the Ward Councillor, a staff member may attend to act as a note taker.

Councillors may request the attendance of a specific Council Officer to discuss a specific item. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for determining the attendance and role of Council officers at Ward Meetings.

6.14.3. Advertising

Advertising will be conducted via Council's website and social media channels, and signage at Council's Civic Centre and local libraries.

Additional advertising may be considered in accordance with section 6.15 of this Policy.

6.15. Other Expenditure Not Specified

Where any expense sought to be paid for, or reimbursed to, a Councillor is not covered by this Policy or exceeds the budgetary limits in section 6.4.2 the following process shall apply:

- The Councillor shall make application prior to incurring any expense.
- For expenses \$300 or less and generally within the terms of section 75 of the Act and in compliance with this Policy:
 - The Chief Executive Officer shall confer on the matter with the Mayor (or in the case of Mayoral expenses, the Deputy Mayor).
 - The Chief Executive Officer may then determine the matter and inform the Councillor, providing reasons for their decision.
- For expenses greater than \$300 the matter will be referred to Council for consideration and determination.

Where there is any uncertainty or disagreement as to an entitlement; or where there is any failure to comply with this Policy, the following process shall apply:

1. The Chief Executive Officer shall confer on the matter with the Mayor (or in the case of Mayoral expenses, the Deputy Mayor).
2. The Chief Executive Officer may then determine the matter, or a proposed course of action to resolve the disagreement / uncertainty or the non-compliance, and inform the Councillor, providing reasons for their decision.
3. If the matter remains unresolved it will be referred to Council for consideration.

If the Chief Executive Officer and Mayor have been party to the decision which is the subject of the uncertainty / disagreement:

1. The Chief Executive Officer shall refer the matter to the Director Customer and Performance for independent review.
2. The Director Customer and Performance shall confer with the Manager Governance and Risk and determine the matter, or agree a proposed course of action to resolve the disagreement / uncertainty or the non-compliance.
3. The Director Customer and Performance will inform the affected Councillor of the proposed course of action to resolve the disagreement / uncertainty or the non-compliance.
4. If the matter remains unresolved it will be referred to Council for consideration.

6.16. Claims and records

6.16.1. Form of claims

All claims must be made on the form provided and be complete as to all specified detail.

Councillors and delegated committee members may also be periodically requested to certify details of expenses incurred on their behalf.

The following substantiation rules apply to all expense claims.

- A claim for reimbursement must be supported by written evidence, being a receipt, tax invoice or similar document that sets out the relevant particulars. This means a document from the supplier of the goods or services the expense is for, setting out:
 - the name or business name of the supplier; and
 - the amount of the expense, expressed in the currency in which it was incurred; and detailing any GST paid, and
 - the nature of the goods or services; and
 - the date the expense was incurred; and
 - the date the document was made.
- Where this documentation is not available a statutory declaration must be submitted to support the claim.

Incomplete claims or claims which are outside this Policy will be initially referred to the claimant Councillor for further advice.

Claims which are not in accordance with this Policy will be considered under section 6.15.

6.16.2. Timeframe for submission of claims

Councillors and delegated committee members are required to submit claims in a timely manner to ensure transparency and timely accountability.

Claims for reimbursement of expenses in the September, December and March quarters must be submitted by the close of business of the following month.

Claims for reimbursement of expenses in the June quarter must be submitted within 7 working days of the end of financial year.

Claims for reimbursement which are not in accordance with the above timeframes will not be processed unless Council resolves to accept the claim.

6.16.3. Assessment of claims

The Chief Executive Officer will oversee the processing of all claims by the Governance Department.

Where a claim appears incomplete or outside this Policy it will be initially referred to the claimant Councillor for further discussion. Unresolved issues will be managed in accordance with Section 6.15.

6.17. Accountability

Council is committed to accountability and transparency for reimbursement of expenses and the provision of resources and facilities to Councillors. This Policy will be posted on Council's website.

Quarterly reports of all councillor and delegated committee member expenses will be provided to council, and the council's Audit and Risk Committee.

The report will include:

- expenses incurred on behalf of councillors and delegated committee members during the quarter;
- reimbursement claims made by councillors and delegated committee members during the quarter; and
- reimbursements made by councillors and delegated committee members during the quarter.

In accordance with Council's Public Transparency Policy, Council maintains a public register which includes details of overseas or interstate travel (other than interstate travel by land for less than 3 days) undertaken in an official capacity by any Councillor in the previous 12 months, including—

- the name of the Councillor;
- the dates on which the travel began and ended; and
- the destination of the travel; and
- the purpose of the travel; and
- the total cost to the Council of the travel, including accommodation costs.

Council's annual report shall include information regarding all Mayoral and Councillor expenses (whether paid directly by Council or reimbursed to the Councillor) broken down into categories as required by the Act:

- Transport and Travel
- Communications Equipment
- Conferences, Seminars, Training and Professional Development
- Professional Memberships
- Carer Support
- Other Expenses

7. Administrative Updates

From time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this policy. Where an update does not materially alter this policy, such a change may be made administratively on approval of the Chief Executive Officer. Examples of minor administrative changes include changes to names of Council departments or positions, change to names of Federal or State Government departments or a minor amendment to legislation that does not have material impact. Where any change or update may materially change the intent of this policy, it must be considered by Council.

Appendix 1 Extract from Taxation Determination TD 2023/3 - Income tax: what are the reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expense amounts for the 2023-24 income year?

Table 3: Reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses – employee’s annual salary \$247,021 or more

Place	Accomm. (\$)	Food and drink (\$) breakfast 38.90 lunch 55.00 dinner 77.00	Incidentals (\$)	Daily total (\$)
Adelaide	211	as above	32.90	414.80
Brisbane	257	as above	32.90	460.80
Canberra	246	as above	32.90	449.80
Darwin	293	as above	32.90	496.80
Hobart	235	as above	32.90	438.80
Melbourne	265	as above	32.90	468.80
Perth	265	as above	32.90	468.80
Sydney	265	as above	32.90	468.80
All country centres	\$195 or the relevant amount in Table 4 if higher	as above	32.90	variable

<https://www.ato.gov.au/law/view/pdf/pbr/td2023-003.pdf>

ALLOCATION NO:

knox your city

Claim Form – Carer Costs



Application for Payment or Reimbursement of Carer Costs

Councillor Name:		
Date(s) claimed for:		
Councillor or Delegated Committee Duties undertaken whilst carer support is provided		
Names of person or organisation providing care		
Costs	Hours	
	Hourly Rate	\$
Declaration:	<p>I declare that the above claim is submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Councillor Support Policy and Procedure and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is net of any rebates or subsidies; <input type="checkbox"/> Is not for care provided by a direct relative (as defined); <input type="checkbox"/> the expenses claimed are fair, reasonable, bona fide and reasonably necessary to enable me to perform my duties as a Councillor; and <input type="checkbox"/> I have included appropriate supporting documentation in including a receipt from the caregiver. 	
Councillor Signature		Date:
CEO Signature:		Date:

ALLOCATION NO:

Claim Form – Travel Expenses

knox your city



Application for Payment or Reimbursement of Travel Expenses

Councillor Name:		
Description of Expenses claimed:		
Councillor Duties or Delegated Committee undertaken necessitating travel		
Value of expenses claimed	Travel	\$
	Accommodation	\$
	Attendance/ Registration	\$
	Meals/Drinks	\$
	Other Costs, specify	\$
	Total	\$
Declaration:	<p>I declare that the above claim is submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Councillor Support Policy and Procedure and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> That undertaking the duties of a Councillor was the primary and predominate purpose of travel; <input type="checkbox"/> the expenses claimed are fair, reasonable, bona fide; and <input type="checkbox"/> I have included appropriate supporting documentation. <p>I further understand that details of this travel will be disclosed publicly in accordance with Section 222 of the Local Government Act.</p>	
Councillor Signature		Date:
CEO Signature:		Date:

ALLOCATION NO:

Claim Form – General Expenses

knox your city



Application for Payment or Reimbursement of General Expenses

Councillor Name:		
Description of Expenses claimed:		
Councillor Duties or Delegated Committee undertaken relevant to expenses incurred		
Value of expenses claimed	Type of expenses	Value
		\$
		\$
		\$
		\$
		\$
	Total	\$
Declaration:	<p>I declare that the above claim is submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Councillor Support Policy and Procedure and:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> the expenses claimed are fair, reasonable, bona fide; and</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have included appropriate supporting documentation.</p>	
Councillor Signature		Date:
CEO Signature:		Date: