

THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

COUNCILLOR EXPENSES POLICY

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Introduction

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide the City of Greater Geelong Council, individual Councillors and Delegated Committee Members, with clarity and guidance as to:

- the financial entitlements of Councillors and Delegated Committee Members;
- the appropriate process for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by a Councillor in the performance of their role or by a Delegated Committee Member; and
- the resources and facilities available to Councillors and Delegated Committee Members; to support them in performing their duties in accordance with section 40(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act).

This policy provides Councillors and, where relevant, delegated committee members guidance on:

- the out-of-pocket expenses that can be subject to funding or reimbursement by the City;
- the out-of-pocket expenses the City will not meet;
- the process to follow when applying for reimbursement and in reimbursing out-of-pocket expenses as required under section 41 of the Act; and
- the resources and facilities the City will make available to the Mayor and Councillors to enable them to effectively perform their role as required under section 42 of the Act.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Councillors at the City of Greater Geelong and Delegated Committee Members.

Definitions

Term	Definition
ACT	Local Government Act 2020
CARER	S41(2)(d) of the Act – a Councillor or delegated committee member who is a carer in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the Carers Recognition Act 2012
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CITY	The City of Greater Geelong organisation, led by the CEO.
COUNCIL	The City of Greater Geelong Council comprised of elected councillors and led by the Mayor.
COUNCILLOR	A person who holds the office of member of Council; for the purposes of this policy, it includes the Mayor, unless indicated to the contrary
COUNCILLOR PORTAL	The City's internal intranet facility for Councillors
COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE SERVICES	Support unit at the City for the Mayor and Councillors
DELEGATED COMMITTEE MEMBER	A member of a delegated committee established by Council under section 63 of the Act.
OFFICER	An employee of the City

Policy

1. MAYORAL AND COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES

- 1.1 In accordance with section 39 of the Act, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors are entitled to receive an allowance while performing their duties as elected officials.

2. CALCULATION OF ALLOWANCES

- 2.1 Allowances are set by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal as per section 39(4) of the Act. A Council cannot pay an allowance that exceeds the amount specified in the relevant determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal.
- 2.2 As Councillors are not employees, they are not entitled to the minimum superannuation guarantee. The Independent Remuneration Tribunal has considered this when setting Councillor allowances, and this is factored into the determination. Councillors may elect to have a portion of their allowance paid into their superannuation fund.
- 2.3 Allowances are taxable income and are paid in arrears monthly. Payment will be made by electronic funds transfer, into an account authorised in writing by the Councillor.
- 2.4 Payment to a Councillor ceasing to hold office or pending an election will be calculated based on the date on which the Councillor will cease to hold office. If monies have been paid in advance to a Councillor who is ceasing to hold office, any monies paid in advance of the date of cessation are to be refunded to the City by the Councillor.

3. OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES MET BY THE CITY

The City will either:

- 3.1 fund by paying a third-party provider; or
- 3.2 reimburse a Councillor or Delegated Committee Member the out-of-pocket expenses to the extent and limits outlined in Appendix 1, provided the City is satisfied that the out-of-pocket expenses:
 - 3.2.1 are legitimate
 - 3.2.2 are declared in writing by the Councillor or delegated committee member as being:
 - 3.2.2.1 reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or Delegated Committee Member; and
 - 3.2.2.2 reasonably necessary for the Councillor or Delegated Committee Member to perform that role; and
 - 3.2.2.3 are charged to the financial year in which they occurred (expenses cannot be carried forward into the next financial year).
- 3.3 The following out-of-pocket expenses remain the sole responsibility of Councillors or Delegated Committee Members and are ineligible for reimbursement:
 - 3.3.1 The cost of any road, traffic, parking or public transport infringements or penalties incurred by Councillors or Delegated Committee Members, whether or not in the course of performing their role.
 - 3.3.2 Any private travel, even if combined with approved interstate or overseas travel while performing their role.

3.3.3 Other than by specific Council resolution, in accordance with a Council policy or at State Government direction, any legal expenses incurred by a Councillor or Delegated Committee Member.

3.3.4 Expenses or other support for an attendance at political party events; or

3.3.5 Any other expenses that are not eligible expenses outlined in Appendix 1.

4. PROCESS FOR COUNCILLORS TO CLAIM AN EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

4.1 All claims must be made online using the approved expense reimbursement form available on the Councillor Portal.

4.2 A Councillor must submit a properly completed form and declare the claim is in accordance with section 40 of the Act and this policy.

4.3 Original tax invoice receipts must be obtained and provided to the Council and Executive Services team or attached electronically to the online claim for all relevant claims – credit card receipts will not be accepted.

4.4 Claims for expenses incurred in the financial year must be submitted to the City quarterly or where that quarter is at the end of the Financial Year, within seven days. Claims lodged outside these timeframes will not be reimbursed. Councillors are encouraged to submit claims monthly.

4.5 The Council and Executive Services team will assess each claim for compliance against this Policy.

4.6 If the claim is approved, reimbursement will be made to the Councillor's nominated bank account by electronic funds transfer.

4.7 If the claim is denied, the Manager Council and Executive Services will advise the Councillor in writing of the reasons.

5. PROCESS FOR DELEGATED COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO CLAIM AN EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

5.1 All expense claims for Delegated Committee Members must be requested through the relevant committee secretariat.

5.2 Committee secretariats must follow the City's internal process for reimbursement.

5.3 A Delegated Committee Member must submit a properly completed form authorised for such use by the City, and declare the claim is in accordance with section 40 of the Act and this policy.

5.4 Original tax invoice receipts must be obtained and provided to the relevant committee secretariat or attached electronically to the online claim form for all relevant claims – credit card receipts will not be accepted.

5.5 Claims incurred in a financial year must be submitted to the City quarterly or where that quarter is at the end of the Financial Year, within seven days. Claims lodged outside these timeframes will not be reimbursed. Delegated Committee Members are encouraged to submit claims monthly.

5.6 The claim will be assessed against this Policy by the committee secretariat.

5.7 If the claim is approved, reimbursement will be made to the Delegated Committee Member's nominated bank account by electronic funds transfer.

5.8 If the claim is denied, the committee secretariat will advise the Delegated Committee Member in writing of the reasons.

6. RESOURCES AND FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO COUNCILLORS

- 6.1 The resources and facilities available to the Mayor and the Councillors which are reasonably necessary to enable them to effectively perform their role are listed in Appendix 2.
- 6.2 If Councillors choose to purchase the equivalent of any resources or facilities made available to them as outlined in Appendix 2, Councillors will not be entitled to claim reimbursement for their own purchase of those same resources and facilities.

Implementation of this Policy

7. TRANSPARENCY MONITORING AND REPORTING

- 7.1 The City will report details of all reimbursement to the Audit and Risk Committee in compliance with its obligations under section 40(2) at least quarterly.
- 7.2 The report will include:
 - 7.2.1 expenses incurred by Councillors and Delegated Committee Members for the relevant quarter; and
 - 7.2.2 reimbursement claims submitted by Councillors and Delegated Committee Members approved by the City for the relevant quarter.
- 7.3 Councillors and Delegated Committee Members expenses will be published by the City in its Annual Report in accordance with section 98(2)(f).
- 7.4 The cost to Council of all payments, charges and reimbursements made under this policy will be publicly reported on a quarterly basis on the Council's website. The quarterly report will be published within one month of the end of the quarter.
- 7.5 Councillors will be provided with a copy of their quarterly expense report.
- 7.6 Reports will identify costs for each Councillor including:
 - 7.6.1 Councillor allowances, includes statutory allowances for the Mayor and Councillors, inclusive of any amount sacrificed into a complying superannuation fund.
 - 7.6.2 Communication costs, includes monthly fees and usage costs associated with Councillor smart phone and computer equipment. They do not include any charges reimbursed by Councillors.
 - 7.6.3 Travel expenses, includes taxi fares, public transport costs, reimbursement to Councillors for kilometres travelled in their private vehicles, airfares, accommodation and ancillary costs associated with travel for Council business.
 - 7.6.4 Community representation, includes cost of attendance at events while representing Council in an official capacity, such as community events, dinners, fundraisers, media events, and network meetings.
 - 7.6.5 Professional development, includes registration fees, travel and accommodation costs associated with attendance or participation in conferences or professional development programs and professional membership fees; and
 - 7.6.6 Other costs, includes carer expenses, other incidental expenditure incurred by Councillors in performing their Councillor role.
- 7.7 Following attendance at any conference approved by Council resolution under the terms of this policy, Councillors should present a report to Council providing an overview of the conference program and its relevance to the City. Councillors should present this report to Council within two months of their return.

ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

The Chief Governance & Risk Officer manages the provision of advice to the organisation regarding this policy.

RECORDS

The City must retain records associated with this Policy and its implementation in accordance with its Records Information Management Policy.

REVIEW

The City should review and, if necessary, amend this Policy within three months of a General Council Election.

References

Legislation

Carers Recognition Act 2012

Local Government Act 2020

Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013

Other Documents

Records Information Management Policy

Model Councillor Code of Conduct

Councillor Gifts Benefits and Hospitality Policy

Child Safe Standards Management Policy

Appendix 1: Eligible out of pocket expenses

The following out-of-pocket expenses are eligible for reimbursement pursuant to the requirements of section 40(1)(a), (b) and (c) of the Act.

1. CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND TRAINING

Councillors will be regularly provided with details of recognised peak body and/or industry approved conferences, seminars and training for their reference and attention.

Council will meet the cost of registration fees, accommodation, travel expenses, meals and other incidentals associated with authorised attendance at conferences, seminars and training.

The aggregate expenditure per councillor to attend such conferences and seminars does not exceed \$3,500 per annum.

The \$3,500 limit only applies to the actual cost of the meeting, conference or training program and does not include the cost of meals, accommodation and travel. All additional expenses form part of the Councillors \$3000 allowance to attend events and functions and support the performance of the role of Councillor.

A Councillor's attendance at a particular conference or seminar will be assessed against the following criteria by the responsible officer:

- course topic, content, location, date and duration.
- relevance of conference to Council business and the Councillor's personal development requirements.
- analysis of the costs including the course, course material, travel and accommodation for the Councillor; and
- benefits expected to result from attendance.

With the CEO's approval, a Councillor may elect to use the full-term allowance in a single payment for a significant course or qualification.

1.1 GOVERNMENT AND PEAK BODY ATTENDANCES

Councillors may attend conferences, seminars, meetings or training arranged by:

- Local Government peak bodies in which the Council holds current membership or association (e.g. MAV, ALGA, ALGWA);
- State, Federal or Local Government authorities; or
- The Chief Executive Officer or Mayor.

Attendance at such programs:

- Is not subject to the \$3,500 annual limit referenced elsewhere in this policy; and
- Must be approved by the Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer upon written request from the Councillor.

There is no prescribed individual expenditure limit for these attendances; however, approval will be subject to available budget.

All associated costs will be recorded and published in quarterly expense reporting.

1.2 MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA (MAV) REPRESENTATION

Out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the appointed Councillor delegate (or sub-delegate) to attend Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council meetings and Annual General Meetings will be reimbursed by Council and are not subject to the \$3,500 annual limit referenced elsewhere in this policy.

2. COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE IN A REPRESENTATIVE CAPACITY

Out-of-pocket expenses for Councillors' attendance at meetings, events or functions where they are representing their community, or the Council will be reimbursed by the City:

The aggregate expenditure to attend such meetings, events or functions does not exceed \$3000 per annum; and provided that the primary purpose of attendance by a Councillor at the meeting, event or function must be:

- to officially represent the Council or to perform their role as Councillor; and in compliance with sections 40(1)(b) and (c) of the Act; and
- where hospitality is incidental to the attendance, event or function and not the primary purpose for the attendance.

Council recognises that the role of Mayor carries the expectation that the incumbent will represent Council at events. Therefore, the \$3000 limit set out above does not apply to attendances at any activities specific to the role of the Mayor, or any Councillor attending an event on behalf of the Mayor.

3. FUNDRAISING EVENTS

The City will meet the out-of-pocket expenses of the Mayor (or Deputy Mayor) to attend charity fundraising events. The costs of attending by other Councillors other than the Mayor (or Deputy Mayor) will be borne by the Councillors themselves, unless that Councillor has also been invited in addition to the Mayor, or attendance is delegated by the Mayor.

4. ACCOMPANYING PERSON (COUNCILLORS ONLY)

The City will meet reasonable expenses incurred for an accompanying person when formally invited to accompany a Councillor in the performance of the role of Councillor where the attendance is within Victoria. This includes the accompanying person of a Councillor who is invited to an event or function by the Mayor and/or CEO. The cost will be reimbursed as part of the Councillor's \$3,000 annual limit to attend events and functions.

A councillor must not seek, solicit, or use their position with Council to obtain an invitation for an accompanying person.

Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses in paragraph 1 are limited to the cost of entry or participation in the event. Costs associated with grooming, special clothing and transportation are not included.

Councillors will act in accordance with the Councillor Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy when accepting invitations and disclosing offers.

5. INTERSTATE AND OVERSEAS TRAVEL

As part of their duties, Councillors are at times required to undertake interstate and international travel on behalf of Council. Representation of Council at national and international levels is an important part of developing, communicating and implementing Council policy. It may include travel to investigate issues, projects or activities of relevance to actions contained in the Council Plan and other policies, strategies and programs including those relating to committee and portfolio responsibilities. This section applies to all travel not otherwise provided for under clause 1.1.

5.1 INTERSTATE TRAVEL – COUNCILLORS (excluding the Mayor)

All interstate travel by Councillors (excluding the Mayor) requires prior approval of Council.

Requests must:

- Be submitted in accordance with the Governance Rules;
- Use the approved report template;
- Demonstrate strategic alignment and anticipated benefits; and
- Outline estimated costs.

A post-travel report is not required to be presented to Council; however, Councillors must provide a written report to fellow Councillors outlining outcomes, benefits and costs.

All costs will be recorded against the individual Councillor's expenses and published quarterly.

5.2 INTERSTATE TRAVEL BY THE MAYOR

Where the Mayor (or delegate) is attending as Council's official representative, prior Council approval is not required.

Approval must be obtained from the Chief Executive Officer.

Due to the nature of Mayoral commitments, proposals may be submitted directly to the CEO.

All costs will be recorded and published in quarterly expense reporting.

5.3 INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL BY THE MAYOR

All international travel by the Mayor and Councillors requires prior approval of Council, except in urgent circumstances.

Requests must:

- Be submitted in accordance with the Governance Rules;
- Use the approved report template;
- Demonstrate alignment with Council strategies and partnerships;
- Clearly outline anticipated costs, funding sources and expected benefits.

5.4 POST TRAVEL REPORTING – INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

A post travel report is mandatory for all Council-approved international travel.

The report must:

- Detail outcomes and benefits achieved;
- Disclose total costs incurred;
- Be prepared within 60 days of return; and
- Be submitted to the next available Council meeting.

If the report cannot be prepared within 60 days, the reason for delay must be documented.

All costs will be recorded against the individual Councillor's expenses and published quarterly.

5.5 URGENT TRAVEL APPROVAL

Where travel approval is required prior to a scheduled Council meeting:

- Deputy Mayor and Councillors must seek approval from the Mayor in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer.
- Approval for urgent international travel by the Mayor must be obtained from the Chief Executive Officer and receive financial approval from the Director of Corporate Services.

Urgent circumstances are those where a travel requirement arises unexpectedly and a Council meeting is not scheduled prior to departure.

5.6 POST TRAVEL REPORT

A post travel report is required for all Council approved international travel undertaken by the Mayor and Councillors. The report should outline the outcomes and benefits of the travel, costs incurred and should be prepared within 60 days of return from travel and submitted for agenda listing at the next available meeting of Council. If a period of greater than 60 days is required for the preparation of a report, an explanation for the delay should be included in the report once prepared.

A post travel report for interstate travel is not required to be presented at a Council meeting. Councillors, excluding the Mayor, should prepare a report for sharing with their fellow Councillors.

To ensure transparency all costs for Travel interstate and internationally will be recorded against each Councillors expenses, which are published on a quarterly basis.

6. TRAVEL, ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

Eligible out-of-pocket travel expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or Delegated Committee Member, includes public transport (train, bus, taxi, ride share), air travel and airport transfers, car parking fees, tolls, etc.

Where overnight accommodation is necessary and reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or Delegated Committee Member, the accommodation will be chosen as fit for purpose considering reasonable cost and location.

No reimbursement will be made without receipts and for the purpose of this clause, reasonable meal expenses will be in accordance with the Australian Taxation Office's Taxation Determination.

Costs for mini bar use and in-house movies will not be paid for by the Council and are therefore the responsibility of the Councillor.

Bookings for air travel will be made by Council officers through Council's approved travel agent. In selecting the appropriate fare, officers will seek to book the best value fare, having regard to cost, timing, quality and any fare conditions such as cancellation fees and additional charges.

Councillors are unable to accrue loyalty points for any travel, accommodation or additional expenses paid by the City.

7. PERSONAL TRAVEL

Councillors may request that their itinerary be extended for personal reasons. If an extension results in a higher fare, Councillors must reimburse Council for the difference. If an extension in dates results in a lower fare, no payment to the Councillor will be made.

Any additional costs arising from a partner, spouse or companion accompanying a Councillor on a business trip must be borne by the Councillor or accompanying person, unless there is a pre-approved business purpose to support their presence. Where Councillors wish to 'upgrade' their travel, such as by flying in business class, staying in a higher standard of accommodation or hiring a prestige car or similar, they can do so at the Councillors own expense.

8. CHILD CARE AND DEPENDENT CARE

In accordance with sections 41(2)(c) and (d) of the Act, the City will reimburse costs to a Councillor or delegated committee member where the provision of childcare is reasonably required; or the provision of care for a dependent is reasonably required for the Councillor to perform their role.

The care must be provided by a recognised care provider as defined in the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*. Evidence to support the claim for reimbursement of this out-of-pocket expense must be provided detailing the date and time care was provided and the reason care was needed, for each occasion. Care expenses that may be claimed include but is not limited to:

- childcare centre fees,
- home care,
- hourly fees,
- agency booking fees,
- reasonable travel expenses relating to the care of the dependant.

Care related expenses will not be paid by the City or reimbursed to a Councillor or Delegated Committee Member where the care provider:

- resides either permanently or temporarily with the Councillor or Delegated Committee Member; or
- has any financial or pecuniary interest with the Councillor or Delegated Committee Member; or
- has a familial or like relationship with the Councillor or Delegated Committee Member or their partner.

9. COUNCILLOR WELFARE SUPPORT

The CEO can approve any Councillor out-of-pocket expenses relating to any guidance or coaching that may be required to enhance that person's performance as a Councillor.

A Councillor experiencing difficulties with performing their role, or personal difficulties that may impact on their ability to perform their role, may access free and confidential counselling services through the City's Employee Assistance Program.

10. CAR POOL USAGE

Councillors are eligible to use City owned pool cars to perform Councillor duties. Booking of pool cars can be requested via the Council and Executive Services team. In using City fleet, Councillors agree to abide by the City's policies.

11. CAR MILEAGE

Councillors and Delegated Committee Members are eligible to claim car mileage expenses when using their private vehicles to attend to Council Business.

Travel is measured to and from their main City of Greater Geelong residence (or City of Greater Geelong rateable property) and is recommended to be undertaken as efficiently as possible.

Councillors and Delegated Committee Members will be entitled to a rebate for kms travelled while using their own vehicles in accordance with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) rate upon receipt of a duly completed car mileage claim form on the Councillor Portal.

Mileage claimed in relation to eligible council business must be documented in Councillors' and Delegated Committee Members' diaries prior to the event date. Diary entries must contain sufficient detail to be able to be independently substantiated for audit purposes.

Councillors and Delegated Committee Members must maintain a vehicle logbook, or some appropriate form of written or digital record in relation to the use of their private vehicle while conducting eligible council business, including recording total distance travelled, relevant locations of the travel; the date of travel; and the purpose of the travel. The record must be made available for inspection on request for audit purposes.

Car mileage expense claims are to be completed on a quarterly basis, or where that quarter is at the end of the financial year, within seven days. Claims lodged outside these timeframes will not be reimbursed.

12. WORKPLACE SCREENING CHECKS

The City will reimburse the cost of any required screening checks for Councillors and Delegated Committee Members. This includes the Working With Children Check, which will be reimbursed upon presentation of a valid receipt, as well as other mandatory checks such as a National Police Check, where these are necessary for a Councillor to perform their role.

13. INSURANCE

When performing their roles, Councillors and Delegated Committee Members are covered by Personal Accident Insurance, Public Liability Insurance, Professional Indemnity Insurance, Councillors and Officers Liability Insurance and Travel Insurance.

The City will meet the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim made against a Councillor or Delegated Committee Member arising from performing their role where any claim is accepted by the City's Insurers, whether defended or not. Insurance is not a reportable expense.

14. LEGAL EXPENSES

Other than by a specific Council resolution, or in accordance with a Council policy, any legal expenses incurred by a councillor initiating an action are the responsibility of the Councillor.

Where the Councillor is the defendant or respondent in an action brought against them in their role as Councillor by a third party, the Council's appropriate insurance policy will respond (subject to terms and conditions) and cover such costs. The Council will cover any insurance excess (known as a deductible) in these circumstances.

15. WORKCOVER (COUNCILLORS ONLY)

When performing their roles, Councillors are covered by the City's WorkCover insurance policy in accordance with section 46(2)(f) of the Act. The City will meet the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim made by a Councillor arising from performing their role. WorkCover is not a reportable expense.

Appendix 2: Resources and facilities

1. OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

As the leader of the Council, the Mayor has additional responsibilities over and above other Councillors.

The City will provide dedicated administrative support to the Mayor that is reasonably required to enable the Mayor to perform their role.

The City will pay for reasonable expenses incurred in discharging Mayoral responsibilities, in accordance with this Policy. The level of support will be determined by the CEO in consultation with the Mayor and budgeted positions. A city owned Mayoral vehicle and a dedicated office at Wurriki Nyal including communications equipment and meeting facilities will be provided.

2. MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

The City will provide administrative support to assist the Mayor and Councillors reasonably required to perform their role, including support to:

- Manage invitations to attend events and functions where speaking on behalf of Council
- Use the Councillor Portal
- Respond to requests for information, in accordance with the relevant organisational standards, protocols and processes
- Arrange travel and accommodation reservations in accordance with this Policy
- Access training and development opportunities in accordance with this Policy; and
- Process claims for expense reimbursement in accordance with this Policy.

3. COUNCILLOR PORTAL

Access to information and administrative support will be streamlined by the provision of a dedicated Councillor Portal.

The Councillor Portal will provide information, services and support that will assist Councillors to perform their role. Councillor requests for service or information must be made through the Councillor Portal.

The Council and Executive Services team will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the Councillor Portal and will support, inform and educate Councillors on using the Councillor Portal.

To support Council's commitment to environmental sustainability and our Clever and Creative Vision, Councillors will be provided with IT devices to support mobility and accessibility, and to reduce the use of paper.

4. COUNCILLOR WORKSPACE AND MEETING ROOMS

Wurriki Nyal includes a dedicated Councillors' Lounge reserved for exclusive use by the Councillors. This room is suitable for office work, reading, research and small meetings. Other meeting rooms on the ground floor at Wurriki Nyal can be booked by the Council and Executive Services team for use by Councillors to conduct meetings during and outside office hours.

Meeting equipment can be made available for meetings upon request. Other venues owned and controlled by Council can be used (subject to availability) by Councillors for activities, meetings, interviews and other functions associated with the performance of their role as Councillors. Council and Executive Services can assist in the booking of these meeting rooms and venues. Meeting equipment can be made available for meetings upon request.

5. BUILDING ACCESS AND PARKING

Each Councillor will be issued a swipe card to access areas designated for Councillors at Wurriki Nyal. Access to administration areas will remain subject to the Staff Interaction Protocols. Complimentary parking is available to Councillors at Wurriki Nyal and City Hall. Building and parking access should only be used when carrying out official Councillor duties.

6. MEALS AND REFRESHMENTS – COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS AND COUNCIL MEETINGS

Councillors will be requested to inform Council and Executive Services of any dietary requirements or preferences at the commencement of their term of office, and to advise of any alterations to those requirements or preferences during their term.

If a Councillor is not attending a Council meeting, briefing or other catered meeting in person, they must notify Council and Executive Services as soon as possible to ensure that catering orders are adjusted accordingly.

Where Council meetings or briefings are held at times which are expected to extend by more than two hours through normal mealtimes, Councillors will be provided with suitable meals. Councillors will be notified of the meal arrangements for such meetings.

Councillors will have access to non-alcoholic refreshments at City Hall and Wurriki Nyal.

7. PROVISION OF HOSPITALITY

The Mayor, on behalf of the Council, can provide reasonable hospitality to groups or individuals who are regarded as key stakeholders with whom the Council seeks to develop closer or more effective working relationships or to further Council's interests and objectives.

There may be occasions when it is necessary and appropriate for Council hospitality to be provided to a particular group or individual by a Councillor, other than the Mayor. Such proposals are to be discussed and approved by the Mayor and CEO prior to the occasion. Alcohol shall not be provided.

All Councillors are expected at such functions to display a high standard of civic leadership regarding the responsible provision and usage of alcohol.

Councillors will not be reimbursed for any hospitality provided without prior approval by the Mayor and CEO. Council will not reimburse any Councillor the cost of any alcohol.

8. DEVICES, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPORT

Councillors will be provided with the following devices, equipment and support, consistent with the City's standards and policies, for Council Business:

- A laptop computer, or equivalent
- A mobile phone
- Mobile internet access and supporting telecommunications to support continuous connectivity
- Support and consumables for City supplied devices
- Reasonable stationery
- Business cards, issued in the current corporate branding of the City; and
- Name badge, issued in the current corporate branding of the City, for use while undertaking Council Business.

The following provisions apply:

- All accounts for City supplied devices will be established and remain on the City's corporate accounts

- All equipment remains the property of the City and must be returned once a Councillor's term ends
- Use of City supplied devices and equipment for non-Council Business is not permitted
- City supplied devices and equipment may only be used by Councillors and Officers
- ICT devices and equipment not provided by the City will not be supported by the City. Councillors will be responsible for the purchase costs, consumables and support required for such devices
- The City will not pay any ongoing service charges for any devices once a Councillor's term ends. The cost of removing any equipment installed at a Councillor's home will be borne by the City, unless otherwise agreed
- Councillors will be provided with a copy of their telephone and data charges on a regular basis and:
 - within 14 days of receiving this information, must identify and inform the Council and Executive Services of any costs incurred which do not relate to Council Business; and
 - repay to the City any costs identified as unrelated to Council Business within a further 14 days.

9. MOBILE PHONE USAGE REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS

Mobile phone usage is restricted to domestic calls. International calls are not to be made unless first authorised by the CEO and must directly relate to the performance of duties associated with achieving the objectives of Council and comply with the mobile phone management procedure.

Where the mobile phone plan allows for unlimited local calls and texts at no extra cost, Councillors will be advised of this and may choose to use the phone for private local telephone call and text usage.

Councillors should note that use of Council's information and communication technology and corporate network, including the internet, must be in accordance with applicable information security policies. All internet usage and telephone and text log data may be monitored by Council to ensure compliance.

All mobile phone and internet usage connected with Council property must be in accordance with Council policies including the Election Period Policy, and with the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

International Roaming may only be approved for Councillors travelling overseas for official Council Business. Councillors who are taking a 'leave of absence' to go overseas will not be eligible to request International Roaming.

Council and Executive Services will maintain a register of all equipment provided to Councillors for Council Business. Such equipment must be returned to Council on completion of tenure of each Councillor and must be in good condition, subject to fair wear and tear.

Facilities and equipment, including consumables and replacements, provided by the City in accordance with this Policy are reportable expenses in accordance with the Act.

10. COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Councillors may wish to host meetings with members of the community as part of their role as community representatives.

The Community Conversation program is intended for Councillors to connect with their ward residents, to be held from February to November, across a variety of locations in the City of Greater Geelong.

These ward-based meetings will be Council funded subject to the conditions outlined below and will be supported by Council officers and subject matter experts where applicable.

This section does not limit a Councillor's right to organise and engage in community meetings/forums that they wish to undertake independently.

Officer support may be provided in an advisory capacity as determined by the CEO. Senior officer attendance at the ward meeting will also be determined by the CEO.

The City will cover the expenses for any venue hire fees and collateral to support the meeting. Additional resources such as an A-Frame and ward pull up banner is available on request.

A suitable Council venue may be determined by the ward Councillor after consultation with officers. When determining an appropriate venue, cost, accessibility and venue size should be taken into consideration to ensure attendees can be accommodated for.

Community Conversations cannot be called when it will clash with Council meetings, Planning Committee meetings, Councillors workshops or Advisory Committee meetings.

Community conversations must not be held within six months before a Local Government Election, and within three months before a State Election or Federal Election.

11. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to the above resources available to each Councillor, the CEO may approve the provision of additional resources to support a Councillor in their duties, either temporarily or for the term of office. Such resources may include corporate or safety apparel; sun smart items such as a hat; and any other necessary resources not anticipated in the development of this policy.