
5 COUNCILLOR EXPENSES AND FACILITIES POLICY - OUTCOMES OF PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Report prepared by: Civic Services Manager
File No.: CLR/07/8/9/6 - BP23/299

REPORT SUMMARY

The Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy ensures that City of Ryde Councillors have access to reasonable facilities and support to enable them to fulfil their civic duties, while also ensuring accountability, transparency and equity.

At its meeting held on 26 April 2023, Council resolved to remove from the Policy, the component for Councillors to claim an expense allowance for attending the LGNSW conference, the National General Assembly of Local Government and the Australian Council of Local Government (including 2023), in relation to registration, accommodation, travel and all other expenses concerning these conferences. Council also resolved to place the updated Policy on public exhibition for a period of 28 days.

Accordingly, the draft Policy was placed on public exhibition, with submissions being accepted between Monday, 29 May 2023 and Monday, 26 June 2023. It should be noted that no public submissions were received during the exhibition period.

This report therefore recommends that Council adopt the Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy – April 2023 as **ATTACHED**.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt the Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy – April 2023 as **ATTACHED**.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy - April 2023 - CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER

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ITEM 5 (continued)

Report

The Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy aims to ensure that all Councillors have access to the appropriate resources and facilities required to fulfil their civic duties.

This Policy ensures that there is accountability and transparency in the facilities provided to Councillors and the reimbursement of expenses incurred by Councillors in carrying out their civic duties. Section 253(1) of the Local Government Act requires Council to give public notice of its intention to adopt or amend this Policy and to allow at least 28 days for the making of public submissions.

There is no longer a requirement to provide a copy of this Policy to the Office of Local Government.

Discussion

At its meeting on 26 April 2023, Council resolved as follows:-

- (a) *That Council amend the Policy to remove the component for Councillors to claim an expense allowance for attending the LGNSW conference, and the National General Assembly of Local Government and the 2023 Australian Council of Local Government, in relation to Registration, Accommodation and Travel and all other expenses in relation to these conferences.*
- (b) *That as the amendments to the Policy are substantial, Council place the updated Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy on public exhibition for a period of 28 days.*

Details of the changes to the attached draft Policy

In accordance with the Council resolution from the meeting of 26 April 2023, the draft Policy was updated and placed on public exhibition.

Additions made to the draft Policy are reflected in ***black bold italics*** and deletions of text are noted in ~~black strikethrough~~.

1. Section 9.2(6) – Page 13: The following text was included:
 - (6) ***With the exception of the LGNSW Conference, the National General Assembly of Local Government Conference and the Australian Council of Local Government***, Council will pay the seminar, conference or training course registration fees charged by the organisers including the costs of related official meals and associated tours where they are relevant to the business and interests of Council. Any time and costs incurred in undertaking activities not related to attendance at the event shall not be included in the expenses paid by Council.

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2. Section 9.2(7) – Page 13: The following text was included:
 - (7) ***With the exception of the LGNSW Conference, the National General Assembly of Local Government Conference and the Australian Council of Local Government***, Council will also meet the cost of meals (and reasonable cost of drinks) when they are not otherwise included in the training, conference or seminar fees. Each Councillor is entitled to seek reimbursement for up to three (3) meals per day to a maximum of \$100 a day. Official receipts will be required for reimbursement under this clause.

3. Section 9.2(9) – Page 13: The following text was included:
 - (9) ***With the exception of the LGNSW Conference, the National General Assembly of Local Government Conference and the Australian Council of Local Government***, Council will meet the reasonable cost of transportation associated with attendance at the seminar, conference or training course.

4. Section 9.2(11) – Page 13: The following text was included:
 - (11) ***With the exception of the LGNSW Conference, the National General Assembly of Local Government Conference and the Australian Council of Local Government***, Council shall provide Councillors with taxi vouchers for travel to a seminar, conference or training course. Councillors must ensure that any unused vouchers and the receipts of used vouchers are returned to Council within seven (7) days of the event.

5. Section 9.2(12) – Page 13: The following text was included:
 - (12) Alternatively, ***with the exception of the LGNSW Conference, National General Assembly of Local Government Conference and the Australian Council of Local Government***, Council will meet the actual costs for public transport, taxis or hire-cars for travel on Council related business.

6. Section 9.2(13) – Page 14: The following text was included:
 - (13) ***With the exception of the LGNSW Conference, National General Assembly of Local Government Conference and the Australian Council of Local Government***, Council shall reimburse transport expenses incurred by a Councillor while using their own private vehicle for Council related business.

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7. Section 9.2.1(15)(e) – Page 14: The following text was included:
- (e) No Councillor can attend a conference at Council's expense without the prior approval of Council, **subject to the provisions of Part B Section 9.2**. Reports to Council are to include details of the conference and an estimate of the associated costs including registration and transport.
8. Section 9.4.1(1) – Page 15: The following text was included:
- (1) Council shall reimburse travel expenses incurred by Councillors for travel on Council related business (**noting the restrictions of Part B Section 9.2**).
9. Section 9.4.2(1) – Page 16: The following text was included:
- (1) Council shall reimburse Council business related to travel expenses by a Councillor while using their own private vehicle, by way of a reimbursement for each kilometre travelled for the specific journey, plus any road tolls and parking fees necessarily incurred (**noting the restrictions of Part B Section 9.2**). The rate of reimbursement for kilometres travelled shall be equivalent to the rates prescribed in the relevant legislation or policies applicable to employees of the Council.
10. Section 9.4.3(1) – Page 16: The following text was included:
- (1) Prior Council approval is required for interstate travel for which reimbursement or payment is sought by Councillors (**noting the restrictions of Part B Section 9.2**). Any proposal for Councillors to travel interstate is to be included in the non-confidential business papers of Council, for which due public notice has been given. Such a proposal cannot be considered in a late report or Mayoral Minute.
11. Section 9.6(1) – Page 18: The following text was included:
- (1) **With the exception of the LGNSW Conference, the National General Assembly of Local Government Conference and the Australian Council of Local Government**, Council shall reimburse reasonable out of pocket or incidental expenses associated with attending conferences, seminars or training courses, and other prior approved travel, incurred by Councillors.
12. Section 9.12(4), (5) and (6) – Page 22: The following text was removed:
- ~~(4) Where a spouse, partner or accompanying person attends an event away from home with the Councillor, additional costs of the person/s will not be met by Council, with the exception of those associated with the Local Government NSW Annual Conference as addressed in clause (5) below.~~

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- ~~(5) Limited expenses of spouses, partners or accompanying persons associated with attendance at the Local Government NSW Annual Conference will be met by Council. These expenses will be limited to the cost of registration and official conference dinners. Travel expenses and the cost of partner/accompanying person tours etc would be the personal responsibility of individual Councillors.~~
- ~~(6) Eligible events (ie Local Government NSW Annual Conference, civic events in the Ryde LGA, and civic events throughout NSW for the Mayor or their representative) should be distinguished from circumstances where spouses, partners or accompanying persons accompany Councillors at seminars and conferences and the like. In these situations all costs must be met by the Councillor or the spouse/partner/accompanying person.~~

Public Exhibition and Call for Submissions

As required by Section 253(1) of the Local Government Act, the draft Policy, was placed on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days. Submissions were invited between Monday, 29 May 2023 and Monday, 26 June 2023.

It is noted that no public submissions were received during the exhibition period and therefore, it is recommended that the draft Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy – April 2023, as **ATTACHED – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**, be adopted by Council.

Critical Dates

Council should be aware that further amendments can be made to the Policy. However, if the amendments are considered to be significant, Council would be required to place the Policy on public exhibition again for a period of 28 days, before it can be returned to Council for further consideration and adoption.

Financial Implications

Adoption of the recommendation will have no financial impact. Payments of expenses and the provision of facilities are included within Council's adopted base budget.