

# **Council Expenses, Support and Accountability Policy June 2025**

# Document Control

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## Document Compliance

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Council acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to 20 fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

Greater Dandenong City Council Policies comply with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the *Climate Change Act 2017*, the Child Safe Standards contained in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Amended) and the Overarching Governance Principles specified in 9(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## Acknowledgment of Country

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Greater Dandenong City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.</b>	<b>POLICY OBJECTIVE (OR PURPOSE)</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>SCOPE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>DEFINITIONS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>POLICY</b>	<b>6</b>
5.1	Councillor Allowances	6
5.2	Travel within Victoria	7
5.3	Travel outside of Victoria	8
5.4	Carer Expenses	8
5.5	Attendance at Dinner and Other Non-Council Functions	9
5.6	Information Technology	10
5.7	Civic Support, Equipment and Facilities	11
5.8	Professional Development	14
5.9	Other Support	14
5.10	Community Forums and Ward Meetings	15
5.11	Additional Support and Facilities for the Mayor	15
5.12	Media Support	16
5.13	Other Facilities	16
5.14	Reporting and Disclosure	17
5.15	Working With Children Check	17
5.16	Lost or Stolen Property	18
5.17	Acquisition and Return of Equipment and Facilities	18
5.18	Councillors Reimbursing Council	18
5.19	Councillor Recognition	18
5.20	Election Period	19
5.21	Exclusions	19
5.22	Procedure for Reimbursement of General Expenses	20
5.23	Councillor Mentor and Legal Support	20
5.24	Councillor Dispute Mediators	21
<b>6.</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>REPORTING, MONITORING AND REVIEW</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>BREACH OF THIS POLICY</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS</b>	<b>23</b>
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>25</b>



# 1. POLICY OBJECTIVE (OR PURPOSE)

**Note:** *Unless otherwise stated, this policy also applies to Members of Delegated Committees.*

This policy outlines the support available to Councillors to enable them to perform their official functions and roles, as defined under the *Local Government Act 2020*, by ensuring that expenses, reasonably incurred in the performance of those functions and roles, are reimbursed.

This policy also outlines the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020* in respect to Councillor allowances, expenses and support. It confirms the facilities and support that may be provided to Councillors to assist them in performing or discharging their official functions and duties.

This policy is guided by the following principles:

- Councillors should be supported in performing and discharging their council functions and duties without disadvantage.
- Any reimbursements claimed by Councillors must be for expenses actually and necessarily incurred in performing and discharging their official functions and duties; and
- The payment of Councillor allowances and the reimbursement of expenses must be accountable and transparent to the community.

# 2. BACKGROUND

Under the *Local Government Act 2020* (LGA), sections 40, 41 and 42 outline how Councillors are entitled to resources, support, reimbursement of expenses, including Carer costs which are reasonably necessary to enable them to effectively perform their official functions and duties.

# 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors and Delegated Committee Members and is made in accordance with Section 41 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

# 4. DEFINITIONS

<b>Delegated Committee</b>	is a Delegated Committee established by Council under section 63 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> , a Joint Delegated Committee established by two or more Councils under section 64 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> or a Committee, other than a Community Asset Committee, exercising any power of a Council under the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> or any other Act delegated to the Committee under the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> or any other Act.
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<b>Election Period</b>	defined in the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> as the period that starts at the time that nominations close on nomination day and ends at 6.00pm on Election Day.
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<b>Family Care</b>	includes care provided by a Carer in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the <i>Carer's Recognition Act 2012</i> .
<b>Official functions or duties</b>	<p>includes 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. This includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council, Committee and Briefing session meetings and civic events.</li> <li>• Meetings of external groups and bodies which a Councillor has been appointed Council delegate.</li> <li>• Site inspections or meetings, or to participate in delegations or deputations to which a Councillor has been duly appointed as a representative of Council.</li> <li>• Meetings with residents, community groups, businesses and other stakeholders.</li> <li>• Attendance at community events, fundraisers, awards ceremonies.</li> <li>• Participation in sector wide forums, meetings.</li> <li>• Other meetings which the Councillor attends as part of undertaking their official functions and duties as a Councillor for the City.</li> </ul>

## 5. POLICY

Council's facilities and support services, as detailed in this policy, are available to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors and Delegated Committee Members while performing or discharging their official functions and duties. These facilities and services are not available for use by members of a Councillor's family unless the use is directly related to the Councillor's or Member's official roles.

Recognising the special role of the Office of Mayor, this policy also provides for expenses, facilities and support services specific to that office.

Councillors are personally responsible for any expenditure that does not fall within the criteria set out in this policy. The Manager Governance, Legal and Risk is available to assist Councillors and ensure they understand their entitlements and responsibilities.

### 5.1 Councillor Allowances

Section 39 of the *Local Government Act 2020* provides for Councillor and Mayoral (including the Deputy Mayor position) allowances to be set by determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal.

#### Payment Procedure

Payments for Councillor Allowances will be made through Council's electronic payroll system, on a fortnightly basis. Deductions to a superannuation fund or the Australian Taxation Office will only occur following a written request to the Payroll Office from individual Councillors.

## 5.2 Travel within Victoria

For all travel within Victoria that is undertaken by a Councillor undertaking their official functions and duties, reimbursement of travel costs and incidental expenses shall be under the same provisions as apply under the Council's "Councillor Interstate and Overseas Travel Policy".

### Public Transport

Councillors are encouraged to use public transport to travel to Council business related events, or to assist them to carry out their duties as a first preference.

### Reimbursement Procedure for Public Transport

For reimbursement of travel expenses incurred from use of public transport, Councillors must complete a *Claim for General Expenses Form* (Appendix 1) and submit it to the Manager Governance, Legal and Risk for authorisation and processing. All payments will be made in arrears.

### Private vehicle use

Reimbursement is payable for the use of a private vehicle for:

- attendance at Meetings of Council, Council Advisory, Reference Group or Delegated Committee Meetings, Ordinary, Committee or Sub-Committee Meetings of State, regional or local organisations where the Councillor has been elected as a Council's representative or liaison by Council resolution or the person has been nominated as a Delegated Committee Member;
- attendance at conferences and seminars where such attendance by a Councillor is consistent with the provisions of *section 5.8 Professional Development* of this policy,
- attendance at inspections, meetings and functions within or outside the City relative to the official functions and duties of a Councillor;
- to and from conferences and seminars; and
- attendance at official Council functions.

### Reimbursement Procedure for Private Vehicle Usage

- All claims for reimbursement of travel shall be made on a monthly basis (within 30 days from end of month).
- Details of kilometres and purpose of travel must be recorded by the relevant Councillor
- Councillors must complete a *Claim for Travelling Expenses Form* (Appendix 2) and submit it to the Manager Governance Legal and Risk for authorisation.
- Payments will be made through Council's Electronic Payroll System or such other electronic payment method as required.
- It is the responsibility of Councillors to ensure that claims for reimbursement occur within the monthly time frame. Claims not submitted in a timely manner may be refused reimbursement at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.
- All payments will be paid in arrears.

Where travel costs are borne by Council, it is expected that, where practicable, all travel be by the most direct route, and vehicles are shared where more than one Councillor attends the same function.

### Cabcharge

Each Councillor may request a “Cab-Charge” from Council for the payment of taxi service for events and activities as listed above. These are available from the Mayor and Councillors Office Co-ordinator.

### Council Vehicles

Where practicable, and by prior arrangement through the Chief Executive Officer, a Council vehicle may be made available to Councillors for travel outside the City where use of private vehicles or other means of transport is not available or convenient. The use of a Council vehicle is limited to 24 hours continuous use and the vehicle must be always driven by the Councillor.

### Rideshare vehicles

Where a rideshare vehicle is used, a tax invoice showing the origin and destination of the trip is required for reimbursement, using the *Claim for General Expenses Form* (Appendix 1) and submit this to the Manager Governance, Legal and Risk for authorisation and processing. All payments will be made in arrears.

## **5.3 Travel outside of Victoria**

Travel outside of Victoria is covered by Council’s, Councillor Interstate and Overseas Travel Policy.

All Interstate and Overseas Travel by Councillors for the purpose of undertaking official functions and duties requires prior Council approval.

## **5.4 Carer Expenses**

Council will reimburse carer expenses when the care is necessary to allow the Councillor to attend:

- Meetings of Council, Council Advisory, Reference Group or Delegated Committee Meetings, Ordinary, Committee or Sub-Committee Meetings of State, regional or local organisations where the Councillor has been elected as Council’s representative or liaison or the person has been nominated as a Delegated Committee Member;
- inspections, meetings, Councillor Briefing Sessions, civic ceremonies and functions, conferences and training within or outside the City relative to the duties of office as a Councillor or Delegated Committee Member; and
- a meeting or function or other official role when deputising for, or representing, the Mayor.

Carer expenses may consist of hourly fees, agency booking fees and/or reasonable traveling expenses. Fees are payable per hour or part of an hour subject to any minimum period, which is part of the provider’s usual terms.



A receipt from the care provider (including their ABN) is required for the direct reimbursement of any expenses claimed.

Reimbursement will not be made to a person who:

- has a familial or similar relationship with the Councillor; or
- resides either permanently or temporarily with the Councillor; or
- has any financial or pecuniary interest with the Councillor; or
- has a relationship with the Councillor or their domestic partner such that it would be inappropriate for Council to reimburse monies paid to the care provider.

#### Reimbursement Procedure for Child or Family Care

- All claims for reimbursement of child or family care shall be made monthly (within 30 days from end of month).
- Councillor must complete a *Claim for Child/Family Care Form* (Appendix 3) and submit it to the Manager Governance, Legal and Risk for authorisation and processing.
- It is the responsibility of the Councillor to ensure that claims for reimbursement occur within the monthly time frame.
- Payments will be made through the Finance Unit.
- All payments will be made in arrears.

#### Variation to care – extenuating circumstances

A Councillor may make a written request to the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer, on the basis of extenuating circumstances (including unique familial care knowledge and experience) that the basis of any care be varied and thereby reimbursed.

#### Appeals

A Councillor is entitled to make a complaint or appeal in writing to the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer against any decision regarding a reimbursement.

### **5.5 Attendance at Dinner and Other Non-Council Functions**

Council will meet the cost of a Councillor's attendance at non-Council functions (which includes a dinner) to which they have received a written invitation and where they are attending in their role as Councillors and where topics pertain to matters concerning local government or where local government representation is relevant to Council.

If an invitation to a relevant non-Council function was not received and a Councillor wishes to attend, it will be at the Mayor's discretion and Mayoral approval will be sought via the Mayor.

Invitations outside of these parameters must be paid for by individual Councillors attending and will not be reimbursed.

Where the written invitation includes a spouse or domestic partner, Council will meet the cost of the partner attending a non-Council function or dinner. Costs associated with a Councillor's spouse or domestic partner attending functions will be monitored

by the Mayor and Councillors Office Co-ordinator and will be reported on the Mayoral and Councillors Expenses Spreadsheet (see Expenses Reporting).

### Local Fundraising and Charitable Events

Council will cover the cost of ticketed events for Councillors invited by written invitation to attend Local Fundraiser/Charitable Events, where the event benefits the City of Greater Dandenong.

The Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor, will determine appropriate events for Council to purchase 'a table', if invited to do so. A table will only be purchased if 50% or more Councillors are able to attend. Councillor attendance must have a demonstrated benefit to the local community.

Where the written invitation includes a partner/domestic partner, Council will meet the cost of the spouse or domestic partner attending the local fundraising and charitable event.

All ticketed events must be paid for in advance of the event. Payment can be arranged by contacting the Manager Governance, Legal and Risk.

## **5.6 Information Technology**

In January 2020, Council made a declaration of a climate and ecological emergency and committed the City of Greater Dandenong to emergency action on climate change. Council is committed to reducing its carbon emissions and the impacts of the exposure of a climate change crisis. Councillors are encouraged to avoid the generation and use of hard copy paper-based products whenever possible.

To this end, Councillors will be offered a range of hardware and software and associated infrastructure to provide them with the tools necessary to perform their official functions and duties without the need to default to the use of hard-copy paper-based products. They include, but are not necessarily limited to:

### Mobile Phone

Council will provide a mobile telephone, which is compatible with Council's network, to all Councillors to facilitate communication for official functions and duties. Council will pay all connections, service and rental charges.

Use of Mobile phone is to be in accordance with Council's Mobile Device Policy.

### iCloud storage

Councillors are provided with 5GB of storage on their Council issued mobile for the purpose of storing and accessing data, including photos, files, backups, and more.

Councillors who exceed the 5GB of storage may request to purchase additional storage space via the Chief Information Officer to ensure the most cost-effective solution is sort and additional storage supports the functions and duties required of a Councillors.

### Laptop Computer

Councillors will be provided with a laptop computer with the current Greater Dandenong City Council software configuration, plus a monitor, keyboard and mouse (if requested) to allow access to Council's network and the Internet. IT Support services to maintain functionality and access to the Greater Dandenong City Council network can be accessed from 8.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday and otherwise by prior arrangement.

#### Email and Internet Usage

Use of email and internet is to be in accordance with the Greater Dandenong City Council Policies.

The email address supplied to Councillors is owned by the Greater Dandenong City Council and will cease to exist at the end of a Councillor's term in office.

#### iPad

Council will provide, an iPad with network access to facilitate communication and document management for official functions and duties.

#### Communication and Information Technology Expenses Reporting

All expenses relating to information and communication technology will be reported as required by the *Local Government Act 2020* and associated Regulations.

#### Application for data access outside of Australia

In accordance with Council's Information Security Policy, to ensure the safety and security of Council information, Councillors may not take any Council supplied ICT equipment outside of Australia, nor access Council systems and data from outside of Australia unless prior written permission is obtained from the CEO, based on a substantive business need.

*See also section 5.14 Reporting and Disclosure*

### **5.7 Civic Support, Equipment and Facilities**

Council will provide the following support, equipment and facilities to assist Councillors in carrying out their official functions and duties. All equipment provided shall remain the property of Council and shall be returned within two weeks of ceasing to be a Councillor.

#### Stationery and Office Equipment

Each Councillor will be provided with a supply of the following stationery and office equipment that can be replenished/obtained upon request by contacting the Mayor and Councillors Office Co-ordinator:

- A4 'Councillor Office' letterhead and plain A4 paper (Note: Councillors are encouraged to avoid the use and generation of hard copy paper products whenever possible).
- corporate business cards

- name badge
- filing cabinet
- shredder (small model)
- diary, planner or equivalent
- minor stationery items.

In addition, Councillors are entitled to claim reimbursement for the acquisition of a desk/chair/bookcase to the combined value of \$1500 in any one Council term. Councillors should note that these items remain the property of Council during the term(s) of the Councillor. Upon retiring or leaving Council, Councillors may opt to purchase this equipment back from Council.

*See also section 5.16 Acquisition & Return of Equipment and Facilities.*

#### Reimbursement/Payment of Stationery and Office Equipment

For reimbursement of expenses incurred from the direct purchase of stationery and/or equipment, Councillors must;

- complete the 'Claim for General Expenses' form (Appendix 1); or
- contact the Mayor and Councillors Office Co-ordinator to arrange a purchase order.

*See also section 5.17 Councillor Reimbursing Council.*

#### Administrative Assistance

Administrative assistance will be made available to Councillors for work directly related to the performance of their official functions and duties. All such work will be coordinated through the Mayor and Councillors Office Co-ordinator.

#### Mail

Each Councillor may leave standard mail items of Council designated business for postage through the external mail system. Such mail shall be contained within Council branded envelopes and coordinated through the Mayor and Councillors Office Co-ordinator.

Mail posted directly via Australia Post will require stamps to be affixed and will be at the Councillor's own cost. Councillors will not be reimbursed for this expenditure.

#### Councillor's Work Area

Councillors will be provided with a furnished office on a shared basis at Council's Civic Centre in Dandenong. This will incorporate access to Council's IT network, the internet, printer, furniture, photocopier and telephone and facilitate the following activities:

- letter writing;
- interviewing;
- small meetings;
- reading and research; and

- other business activities relating directly to their official functions and duties.

At times, Members of Delegated Committees may also use the Councillor area at the Civic Centre in Dandenong which will be coordinated through the Mayor and Councillors Office Co-ordinator.

### Meeting Rooms

Councillors can book a meeting room at either the Dandenong Civic Centre or Springvale Community Hub during business hours to facilitate meetings directly related to their civic duties, by contacting the Coordinator Mayor and Councillors Office. The booking process will require Councillors to declare the purpose of the meeting and list of attendees.

After business hours access to general office areas other than designated Councillor's work area at the Dandenong Civic Centre, will only be permitted subject to the approval of the Chief Executive Officer.

Requests to Councillors by members of the public to use Council Meeting rooms, facilities or venues must be referred to Council's Civic Facilities team on 8571 5340 or by emailing [bookings@cgd.vic.gov.au](mailto:bookings@cgd.vic.gov.au).

Meetings with Developers, Submitters and Lobbyists must be in accordance with Councillor Contact with Developers Submitters and Lobbyists Policy.

Venue or room bookings for non-council related matters are subject to Councils fees and chargers, including hire costs, staffing, equipment cost and a security deposit.

### Building Access and Car Parking

Each Councillor will receive a swipe card allowing access to the councillor offices and chambers at the Dandenong Civic Centre Monday to Friday 7am to 11pm. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will have access during those hours 7 days per week.

Limited parking spaces are available for Councillors at the Dandenong Civic Centre offices (car identification permits are required). Permits will be made available by contacting the Mayor and Councillors Office Co-ordinator.

### Website

Each Councillor will be provided with a page on Council's web site – containing a Councillor photo, Councillor profile, contact details, and reference to the ward map.

### Meals/Refreshments

Where Council or Committee meetings are held at times which extend through normal mealtimes, Council will provide suitable meals served on the premises in accordance with Council's Catering and Civic Support Policy.

Tea/Coffee facilities and refreshments are available to Councillors undertaking their official functions and duties at Council offices.

### Publications

Councillors will be entitled to subscribe to relevant publications subject to the approval of the Manager Governance, Legal and Risk.

Councillors will also be supplied, upon request, with links to the *Local Government Act 2020*, *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and any other legislation as requested.

## **5.8 Professional Development**

### *Training and Education*

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillors must complete mandatory training within certain timeframes after a general election of Councillors. Regulations prescribe the matters that must be covered in the delivery of the mandatory training and the timelines for the completion of the training. The mandatory training includes:

- Mayoral training – This must be completed by all Mayors, Acting Mayors (appointed for one month or more), and Deputy Mayors within one month of being elected to the role.
- Councillor induction training – This must be completed by all Councillors within four months of taking the oath or affirmation of office.
- Professional development training – This must be completed by all Councillors annually, beginning in the first full calendar year after being elected.

The matters that must be covered as part of Councillor induction and professional development training are:

- working together in a Council
- decision making, integrity and accountability
- community representation
- strategic planning and financial management
- conduct
- land use planning.

The training may also include any other matters the Chief Executive Officer considers will support Councillors in the performance of their role.

Council will make provisions in the annual budget to ensure that the mandatory training requirements can be met, and time will be set aside during usual Council Business hours throughout the year to enable professional development to be undertaken. Councillors may also need to set aside time outside of usual Council Business hours to undertake professional development, as required.

Upon request, Councillors will be provided with any necessary training/education/resources that will assist them in the use of equipment/software supplied by Council or the acquisition of information necessary in undertaking their official functions and duties.

## **5.9 Other Support**

### *Expenses and Facilities for Councillors with Disabilities*

For any Councillor with a disability or particular needs, Council will provide reasonable additional facilities and associated expenses to allow that Councillor to perform their respective official functions and duties.

### Diversity and Equity

The City of Greater Dandenong is home to many different cultures and faiths. Council acknowledges and actively cultivates and promotes its cultural diversity. Council also promotes equality and equity between all people. Councillors with specific cultural or personal needs will be accommodated to the best of Council's ability and understanding under this policy.

### Insurance

Section 43 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to take out insurance cover for Councillors.

Councillors are covered by the following Council Insurance Policies on a 24-hour basis while performing their official functions and duties including attendance at meetings of external bodies as Council's representatives.

- Personal accident insurance;
- Travel and Journey cover;
- Public liability insurance;
- Professional indemnity insurance; and
- Councillors and Council officers' liability insurance.

Council will pay the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim made against a Councillor arising from Council business where any claim is accepted by Council's Insurers, or admitted under Council's self-insurance program, whether defended or not.

Further details as to the extent of cover and conditions in respect to any of the above cover can be obtained from Council's Manager Governance, Legal and Risk

## **5.10 Community Forums and Ward Meetings**

Council may hold community forums or ward meetings in different locations throughout the year if an issue of significant interest to a particular suburb would benefit from a discussion time with Council in the local area (determined by Councillors). The Guidelines for Community Forums and Guidelines for Ward Meetings are available to guide the conduct of these Forums and Meetings.

The Mayor of the Day will determine how and when they can make themselves available to meet with members of the community. As a general guide, appointments are best arranged through the Co-ordinator, Mayor and Councillors Office. The availability of the Mayor will be dependent on their respective commitments.

## **5.11 Additional Support and Facilities for the Mayor**



The Office of the Mayor operates to facilitate and enable the Mayor to represent the views and directions of Council in performing various roles and duties carried out by the Mayor, under legislation, Council resolution or custom and practice.

### Mayoral Vehicle

Council will provide, at its expense, a fully registered, insured, maintained and fuelled vehicle for use by the Mayor for their official functions and duties and for private use. Council will also meet the cost of cleaning the vehicle.

Unless approved by Council, the mayoral vehicle shall be driven by the Mayor or by the Mayor's spouse/family member, a Councillor or a council officer on the Mayor's behalf while the Mayor is in the vehicle.

Council will also provide a parking space for the Mayor's vehicle at its municipal offices.

### Office Facilities

Council will provide the following Mayoral office facilities:

- private office at Council's Civic Centre in Dandenong equipped with computer and printer; with the current Greater Dandenong City Council configuration to allow access to Council's network and the Internet, furniture and shelving, including desk and meeting table; digital telephone connected to the Council's phone system; and
- Executive Assistance and Administrative Support during normal office hours and at other times by arrangement with the Manager Governance, Legal and Risk.

## **5.12 Media Support**

The Mayor is the principal spokesperson for Council when dealing with the media.

Media support that directly relates to the official business of Council is provided by the Communications team to the Mayor (and to Councillors who are delegated by the Mayor) to manage a particular issue.

The support provided includes responding to media enquiries, providing media advice, developing media releases and arranging media events directly related to the official business of Council.

The support provided is at a level determined by the CEO.

Speaking notes and speech support is only provided for Councillors who are required to speak at function in an official role as a representative of Council (i.e. as the Mayor's delegate or where they are the appointed delegate of the Council to an external body).

## **5.13 Other Facilities**

The Mayor may be provided with other necessary assistance to enable them to carry out the duties of civic office. Such assistance may include, but is not limited to, the following:



- for the purpose of civic functions/ceremonies, ceremonial clothing including Mayoral robes and chains of office.
- A staff member made available to attend events & functions to provide administrative support upon request.

## **5.14 Reporting and Disclosure**

Under the provisions of sections 57 and 58 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council must maintain a Public Transparency Policy and specifically follow the public transparency principles. Details of the documents and registers relating to Councillors will be made available for public access in accordance with that policy:

Councillors will be required to sign off on an annual statement, confirming that the individual Councillor expenses set out in the statement and as published on Council's website during the corresponding financial year are true and correct (Appendix 4) within 30 days following the end of each financial year.

Further, Section 40 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires that all details of reimbursements made to Councillors be reported to the Audit and Risk Committee. A report will be made to this Committee annually.

Accounting Standard AASB 124 Related Party Disclosure requires the disclosure of material related party relationships and transactions by a Key Management Personnel (KMP). Councillors are required to adhere to this Standard. Broadly, these transactions are those that could be perceived as affecting the independence of the elected member. The disclosure required is a listing of transactions and any other beneficial interests between Council and individual Councillors and their related businesses and parties. It is each Councillors responsibility to ensure that details of such related party transactions are supplied to the Chief Financial Officer for reporting purposes.

Councillors should also note that details of any expenses which are reimbursed can be subject to public scrutiny via Freedom of Information.

All disclosures must be retained in accordance with the Public Records Act 1973 (Vic) for a period of 7 years.

## **5.15 Working With Children Check**

Councillors are expected to maintain a current Working with Children Check (at a minimum a Volunteer Working with Children Check) throughout their term as a Councillor.

Where a Councillor is unable to obtain a Working with Children Check or the Working With Children Check is suspended/cancelled during their term they must inform the CEO immediately to ensure appropriate measures are taken.

Councillors will provide the CEO with a copy of their Working with Children Check which will be securely stored.

Councillors will ensure that Greater Dandenong City Council is included in the organisations listed on their Working Children Check and that Working with Children Victoria is notified of changes to personal details within 21 days as per the Working with Children Act 2005.

### **5.16 Lost or Stolen Property**

Council supplied items that are lost will be replaced by Council upon receipt of a Statutory Declaration from the Councillor by the Manager Governance, Legal and Risk.

Where items are lost or destroyed more than once per year, Councillors may be required to personally fund the replacement. All decisions to replace lost or stolen property will be made at the discretion of the Manager Governance, Legal and Risk.

Stolen items should also be reported to Victoria Police and the Manager Governance, Legal and Risk provided with a copy of the incident report. Replacement of the stolen council property will be made following receipt of a copy of the police incident report.

Faulty items will be replaced as soon as practicable.

### **5.17 Acquisition and Return of Equipment and Facilities**

The equipment remains the property of Council and is recorded on Council's Assets Register.

Upon completion of a Councillor term in office, extended leave of absence or at the cessation of civic duties, all equipment and facilities must be returned to Council within two weeks. Arrangements are to be made through the Mayor and Councillors Office Co-ordinator.

Councillors who complete their term in office will be given the opportunity to purchase equipment previously allocated to them at an agreed fair market price.

*See also section 5.7 Civic Support, Equipment and Facilities*

### **5.18 Councillors Reimbursing Council**

A Councillor can only reimburse Council for personal expenses paid for by Council via:

- A written authorisation to deduct the amount from their next Councillor allowance payment (notification via e-mail is acceptable); or
- An Invoice prepared via the Mayor and Councillors Office Co-ordinator.

### **5.19 Councillor Recognition**

To recognize the length of service of a Councillor, the following recognition will be provided. For continuous service of 10 years, 15 years, 20 years and so on in 5 year intervals, the Councillor will receive a certificate of service.

The certificate of recognition will be presented at a Council Meeting and the Councillor is able to invite up to 8 family members and guests to join them at the dinner immediately prior to the Council Meeting where the certificate of service is to be presented.

In addition to the certificate of service recognition:

- For 20 continuous years as a Councillor a small civic function for up to 50 guests will be offered.
- For 30 continuous years as a Councillor a civic function for up to 100 guests will be offered.

When a Councillor ceases to hold office through retirement or defeat at election, the Councillor will be offered a letter under the Common Seal of the City.

At the end of each Mayoral term, the outgoing Mayor will be offered a gift to a value of up to \$200 and the Mayoral photographic portrait may be retained by the Mayor.

At the end of each Mayoral term, the outgoing Deputy Mayor will be offered a gift to a value of up to up to \$100.

If the Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor are elected/re-elected for consecutive terms, the gift will be offered at the end of their final term.

## **5.20 Election Period**

Special conditions for expenses, facilities and resources for Councillors apply during the period prior to an election.

Council has an Election Period Policy, which forms part of the Governance Rules, and this Policy sets out the arrangements that apply during the election period.

Election period applies to all Councillors whether they are seeking re-election or not.

Nothing in this policy shall preclude a Councillor from performing their official functions and duties as a Councillor during the designated election period or inhibit them from representing the interests of the city.

Councillors may not use Council offices or property for any election related purposes.

## **5.21 Exclusions**

Any expenses arising from a breach of road, traffic, parking or other regulations or laws will not be reimbursed or funded by Council in any way.

Any expenses for a Councillor's spouse or domestic partner not expressly included within this policy or the Travel Policy will not be reimbursed or funded in any way.

Any expenses incurred by third parties cannot be claimed.

## **5.22 Procedure for Reimbursement of General Expenses**

Councillors must provide all relevant documentation as set out in this policy, including detailed original itemised receipts and/or tax invoices, for all expense claims. In the case of any internet-online purchases, a copy of the confirmation must be attached to the claim. If a receipt cannot be produced, Councillors may be required to provide a Statutory Declaration.

If a Councillor does not claim a particular expense or use a particular facility within the specified time, they cannot be offset against a claim for another amount for some other expense or facility, unless otherwise stipulated in this policy.

Expenses must be charged to the financial year in which they occurred. Expenses cannot be carried forwarded to different years.

Councillors should not obtain private benefit from the provision of equipment and facilities, however it is acknowledged that incidental use of council equipment and facilities may occur from time to time.

Claims for facilities and expenses other than those included in this document will be subject to Council resolution.

### **Procedure for Reimbursement of General Expenses**

All claims for reimbursement of expenditure shall be made on a monthly basis (within 30 days from end of month):

- Councillors must obtain an itemised receipt and/or tax invoice for any expenditure for which they wish to claim a reimbursement from Council;
- Complete a 'Claim for General Expenses' form (Appendix 1);
- Attach the relevant receipt/invoice to the form and forward it to the Manager Governance, Legal and Risk via the Mayor and Councillors Office Co-ordinator;
- The claim, if in accordance with this policy, will be authorised by the Manager Governance, Legal and Risk for reimbursement. It is the responsibility of Councillors to ensure that claims for reimbursement occur within the monthly time frame (30 days, from end of month);
- All payments will be processed through Council's Finance Department via the Payroll system.

## **5.23 Councillor Mentor and Legal Support**

### **Legal support**

As noted in *section 5.8 Insurance* of this Policy, Council is required to take out a range of insurances for Councillors and these insurances provide coverage when a Councillor is conducting official functions and duties.

It is this insurance that should be relied upon, in the first instance, if a Councillor seeks legal support for a matter. Advice on making a possible claim or to discuss insurance coverage for a matter is available from the Manager Governance, Legal and Risk.

As a rule, if the Councillor is the defendant in a matter, or is subject to investigation by an integrity agency (such as Local Government Inspectorate) then insurance coverage will likely extend to providing the Councillor with legal support. However, this is a matter for the insurer to determine, based on the specific circumstances.

Where the Councillor is a litigant, then insurance coverage will likely not extend to providing the Councillor with legal support. Again, this is a matter for the insurer to determine, based on the specific circumstances.

Where insurance coverage does not extend to the matter or where the claim is denied by the insurer, it is a matter for Council, by resolution, to determine whether the cost of legal support will be covered as a whole or in part by the City.

### Mentor support

In addition to, or in lieu of any legal support that a Councillor might seek for a matter, mentoring support is available to support a Councillor undertake their official functions and duties.

A panel of practitioners is maintained by the Manager Governance, Legal and Risk, in consultation with the Mayor and Councillors, and these practitioners can provide limited hour mentor support to Councillors.

Limited hour mentor support equates to ten hourly sessions per year. If a qualified mentor considers that more support time is required for a particular Councillor's wellbeing, then this will be considered by the CEO under their broad OHS responsibilities, with up to a further ten hourly sessions made available in the year (being a total of up to 20 hourly sessions). Where it is apparent that substantial mentoring or other support is required (over the twenty hourly sessions per year), the provision of that support will be a matter for Council to consider upon and determine, in confidential session.

## **5.24 Councillor Dispute Mediators**

The Model Councillor Code of Conduct and Council's Internal Resolution Procedure provide guidance on dispute resolution processes in the event of a dispute or conflict arising between Councillors.

# **6. RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Councillors** are responsible for:

- the general care of all equipment and furniture provided by the Council or purchased with Council funds;
- complying with all aspects of this policy in conjunction with Council's Travel Policy;
- ensuring that completed party transactions are supplied to the Manager Governance, Legal and Risk for reporting purposes; providing true and correct information when completing reimbursement forms as referenced in this policy;
- seeking their own financial and taxation advice;
- Obtaining a Working With Children Check; and

- Reporting requirements under AASB 125 Related Party Disclosure as outlined in section 5.14 Reporting and Disclosure of this Policy.

**Chief Executive Officer** is responsible for:

- authorising reimbursement of expenses claimed outside of the monthly time frames;
- approving the use of a council vehicle for travel outside the municipality;
- consideration of requests for a variation of care reimbursement;
- accepting written appeals or complaints in relation to any reimbursement decisions;
- authorising an increase in monthly usage limits permitted for mobile phones;
- approving after hours access to general office areas.
- approving the provision of other communication tools (outside the standard issue) for individual Councillors; and
- receiving completed annual related party transaction forms from Councillors as required under Accounting Standard AAS22.

**Manager Governance, Legal and Risk** is responsible for:

- approving reimbursement claim forms submitted by Councillors.
- advising Councillors if any claim appears to breach this policy or is inappropriate.
- assisting Councillors in understanding their entitlements.
- ensuring a copy of this policy and Council's Travel Register are available for public inspection when requested; and
- review of this policy.

**Mayor and Councillors Office Co-ordinator** is responsible for:

- providing administrative support to the Mayor and Councillors in accordance with this policy and their position description.
- processing Councillor requests for reimbursement of expenses; and
- relevant bookings on behalf of Councillors i.e. meeting rooms, conferences.

## **7. REPORTING, MONITORING AND REVIEW**

### **Reporting**

Section 40 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires that all details of reimbursements made to Councillors be reported to the Audit and Risk Committee. A report will be made to this Committee annually.

### **Monitoring**

The Mayor, Chief Executive Officer and Manager Governance Legal and Risk will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and report any matters raised by the Executive Manager Team or Councillors at a Councillor Briefing Session.

**Review**

This Policy will be reviewed within 6 months of an Election and submitted the Audit and Risk Committee prior to Council endorsement.

**Key Stakeholders**

Audit and Risk Committee, Councillors, Executive Management Team, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Information Officer, Manager Governance Legal and Risk, Risk Management Consultant and the Mayor, Councillors Office Coordinator and the Records Management Coordinator.

## 8. BREACH OF THIS POLICY

A breach of this Policy will be considered a failure to comply with the Model Councillor Code of Conduct, which

*Penalty 600 penalty units or imprisonment for 5 years.*

## 9. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

**Legislation**

[Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#)

[Gender Equality Act 2020](#)

[Climate Change Act 2017](#)

[Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Amended\)](#)

[Local Government Act 2020.](#)

[Carers Recognition Act 2012](#)

[Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019](#)

[Victorian Local Authorities Award 2015](#)

[Public Records Act 1973](#)

**Related Council and Other Policies, Procedures, Strategies, Protocols, Guidelines**

- [Greater Dandenong Website – Sustainability, Climate and Energy](#)
- Access Control Policy
- Catering and Civic Support Policy
- Councillor Gift Policy
- Councillor Interstate and Overseas Travel Policy
- Councillor Contact with Developers Submitters and Lobbyists Policy
- Fraud Prevention and Control Policy
- Guidelines for Community Forums
- Guidelines for Ward Meetings
- Information Security Policy
- Internal Resolution Procedure
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Model Councillor Code of Conduct

- [Privacy and Personal Information Policy](#)
- [Public Transparency Policy](#)
- [Privacy and Personal Information Policy](#)
- [Staff and Councillor Interaction Protocol](#)

## **Related Council Forms**

[Appendix 1 - General Expenses Claim Form](#)

[Appendix 2 - Travel Claim Form](#)

[Appendix 3 - Child and Family Care Claim Form](#)

[Appendix 4 - Councillor Annual Statement Sign Off](#)

## **Administrative Updates**

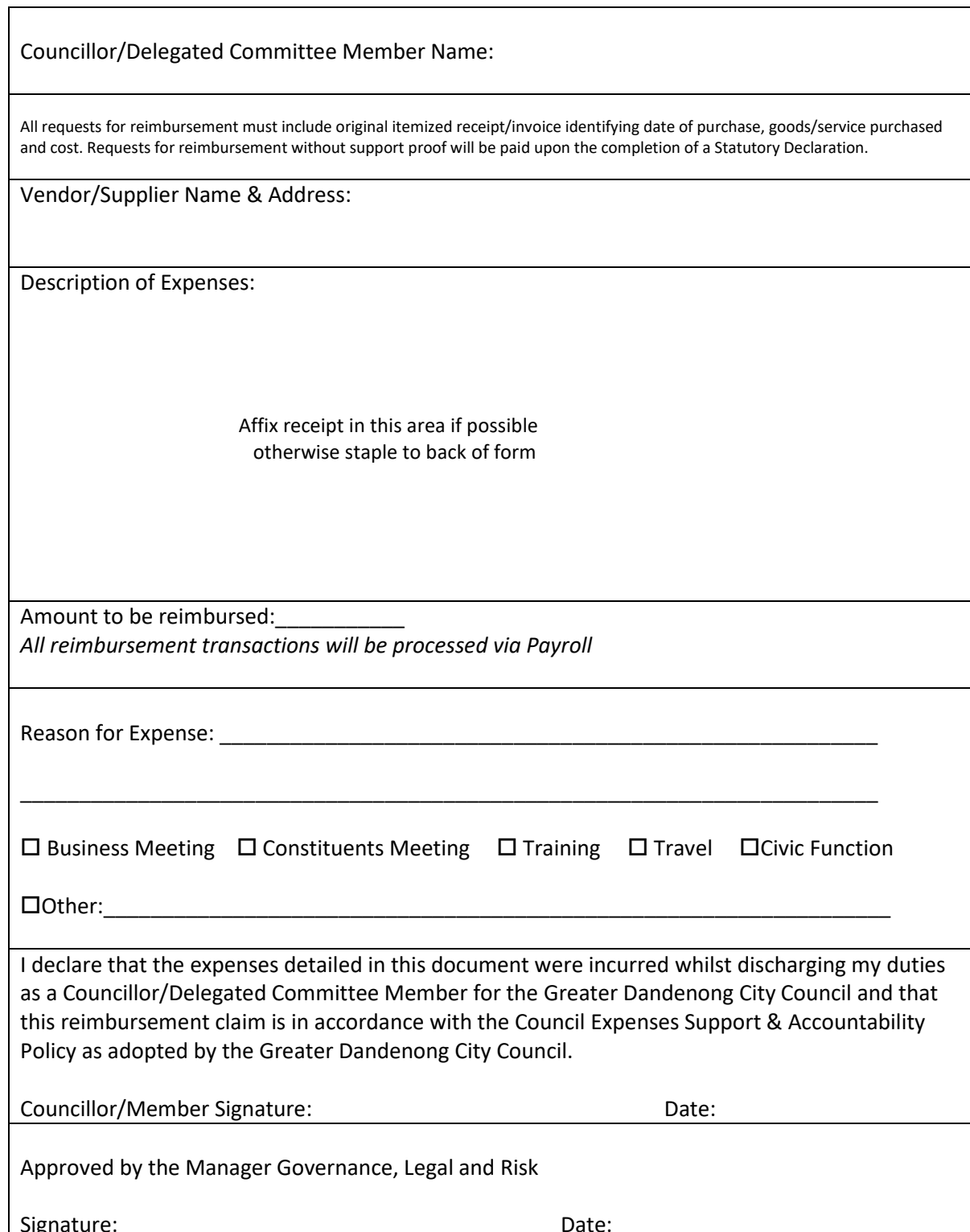
It is recognised that from time to time, circumstance may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively.

Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, the change to an existing policy or document referred to in this policy and minor updates to legislation and the like which does not have a material impact. All changes or updates which materially alter this policy must be by resolution of Council.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Update</b>



## Appendix 1 - Members of Council Claim for General Expenses



## Appendix 2 - Claim for Travelling Expenses – Councillors/Delegated Committee Member

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Make of Vehicle

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Model
-------

Claim for Month : \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

### Appendix 3 - Members of Council Claim for Child/Family Care



Councillor/Delegated Committee Member Name:	
All requests for reimbursement must include original invoice identifying date of service and fees payable. Request for reimbursement without supporting proof will be paid upon the completion of a Statutory Declaration.	
Service Provider Name & Address:	
Description of Expenses:  <div style="text-align: center;">Affix a copy of the invoice in this area if possible otherwise staple to back of form</div>	
Amount to be reimbursed: _____  <i>All reimbursement transactions will be processed via Payroll</i>	
Type of care provided:  <div style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Child                      <input type="checkbox"/> Family</div>	
I declare that the expenses detailed in this document were incurred whilst discharging my duties as a Councillor/Delegated Committee Member for the <del>Greater Dandenong City Council</del> and that this reimbursement claim is in accordance with the Council Expenses, Support, & Accountability Policy as adopted by the Greater Dandenong City Council.	
Councillor/Member Signature:	Date:
Acknowledged by the Manager Governance, Legal and Risk	
Signature:	Date:

## Appendix 4

Annual Statement of Councillor/Delegated  
Committee Member Expenses for the year ending  
30 June 20\*\*



Councillor/Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Expense	Amount Claimed
Mobile Phone	
Training & Conferences	
Airfares	
Taxi/Train Fares	
Accommodation & Meals	
Family Care	
Vehicle Mileage	
Stationery	
Equipment	
Functions	
Other	
<b>Total</b>	

I declare that the above statement of expenses were incurred whilst discharging my duties as a Councillor/Delegated Committee Member for the Greater Dandenong City Council and that the information provided is true and correct and in accordance with the Greater Dandenong City Council, Council Expenses, Support & Accountability Policy.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_