



# COUNCILLOR FEES, ALLOWANCES & REIMBURSEMENTS

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## 1. OBJECTIVE

To clearly outline the support and allowances available to the City's Councillors within the provisions of the Act to cover any "out of pocket" expenses that are incurred in carrying out their function as a Councillor.

## 2. PRINCIPLES

The *Local Government Act 1995* Section 5.98 (the Act) and *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* (the Administration Regulations) provide for Councillor entitlements. The policy provides for clear definitions on reimbursements that Councillors are entitled to. The Salaries and Allowances Tribunal determine values annually based on the respective local government category in which the City is allocated. The amounts to be paid within the ranges are then subsequently agreed to by Council for each category of fee and allowance.

The City shall meet entitlements and reimburse out of pocket expenses that are reasonably incurred as a Councillor and in accordance with this Policy.

### 2.1 Eligibility to Fees and Allowances whilst a Councillor

The Act provides for sitting fees, allowances and reimbursement of specific expenses related to or incurred in performing the role of Councillor for the City of Karratha. These are automatically generated each financial year following the adoption of the budget and will not require a Councillor Claim request.

In accordance with good governance and prudent fiscal management practices, it is incumbent on the CEO to ensure that they satisfy the requirements of Regulation 5 of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* (the Financial Management Regulations). The Financial Management Regulations require that efficient systems and procedures are established to ensure proper accounting for municipal expenditure, proper authorisations exist for incurred liabilities and the consequential making of such payments.

Observing this criteria, Councillors' sitting fees and all other allowances shall be payable monthly in arrears. Where a Councillor does not hold office throughout the payment period, an amount of one twelfth of the annual fee is to be paid for each month or part of a month that the member held office.

#### 2.1.1 Fees for attending meetings

All Councillors who attend Council or committee meetings are entitled to be paid a sitting fee. The fees can be paid based on individual meetings or as an annual fee, in accordance with Section 5.99 of the Act and Regulation 34 of the Administration Regulations.

The fees are paid in lieu of Council and Committee meeting attendance fees and shall be fixed at the prescribed amounts as set by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal regardless of the meeting structure in place, or the number of meetings attended by a particular Councillor.

Councillors are to be paid their fees on a monthly basis in arrears.

### **2.1.2 Mayor Local Government Allowance**

The annual local government allowance for the Mayor is determined by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal and shall be set at the maximum amount in accordance with Section 5.98(5) of the Act and Regulation 33 of the Administration Regulations.  
The allowance to the Mayor shall be paid on a monthly basis in arrears.

Where the Mayor does not hold office throughout the payment period an amount of one twelfth of the annual fee is to be paid for each month or part of a month that the Mayor held office.

The expenditure of the allowance is at the discretion of the Mayor.

### **2.1.3 Deputy Mayor Local Government Allowance**

The annual local government allowance for the Deputy Mayor is determined by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal and shall be set at the maximum amount in accordance with Section 5.98A(1) of the Act and Regulation 33A of the Administration Regulations, which is 25% of the annual local government allowance payable to the Mayor.

The allowance to the Deputy Mayor shall be paid on a monthly basis in arrears.

Where a Deputy Mayor does not hold office throughout the payment period an amount of one twelfth of the annual fee is to be paid for each month or part of a month that the Deputy Mayor held office.

The expenditure of the allowance is at the discretion of the Deputy Mayor.

### **2.1.4 Reimbursement of ICT Expenses**

All Councillors are entitled to be paid the maximum annual allowance as determined by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal in accordance with Section 5.99A of the Act instead of reimbursement under section 5.98(2) for the actual cost related to information and communications technology that might otherwise have been approved for the reimbursement under Regulation 32 of the Administration Regulations.

The allowance is for costs relating to telephone usage including plans/contracts, rentals, mobile phones, mobile devices, extra telephone lines, call cost, internet service provider fees and consumables incurred while performing the functions of the Councillor.

Councillors are to be reimbursed their fees on a monthly basis in arrears.

## **2.2 Authorised Functions**

For the purpose of Regulation 32(1)(a) of the Administration Regulations express authority of the Council is given to Councillors to attend the following functions:

- a) Attendance by a Councillor at any working group meeting, ordinary or special briefing session and council forum, notice of which has been given by the CEO;
- b) Attendance by a Councillor at any meeting of anybody to which the Councillor has been appointed by the Council or to a secondary body as approved by the Chief Executive Officer (but not including any meeting of a regional local government);
- c) Attendance by a Councillor at any annual or special electors' meeting;
- d) Attendance by a Councillor at a City of Karratha civic function to which all Councillors are invited;
- e) Attendance by a Councillor at a citizenship ceremony conducted by the City;
- f) Attendance by a Councillor at any ceremony for the presentation by the City of awards to school students by any Councillor responsible for presentation of the awards;
- g) Attendance by a Councillor at any meeting of a ratepayer/residents association dealing with the interests of a ward represented by that Councillor;

- h) Attendance by a Councillor at any site where:-
  - i. The site is the subject of an item of business on an agenda for a Council briefing session or a Council meeting; and
  - ii. The attendance occurs between the issue of the agenda and the Council briefing session or the Council meeting;
- i) Attendance by a Councillor at a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer or a Director of the City at the request of the Chief Executive Officer or a Director;
- j) Attendance by a Councillor at a meeting with a ratepayer/resident or a local body or group to discuss any local government matter;
- k) Attendance by the Mayor at a meeting or function of anybody including any State Government body, in their capacity as the Mayor, including attendance by the Deputy Mayor or a Councillor in place of the Mayor;
- l) Any other function, meeting or event in their role as a Councillor that is supported by a written invitation.

## **2.3 Reimbursement of Expenses**

It will be up to the individual Councillor to ensure that they complete a "Claim for Reimbursement of Expenses" form and this is submitted within fourteen (14) days after the close of each month.

### **2.3.1 Reimbursement of child care expenses as a result of attendance at an authorised function, meeting of Council or Committee**

In accordance with Section 5.98(2)(a) of the Act and Regulations 31(1)(b) of the Administration Regulations, a Councillor who incurs child care costs (where they are a parent or legal guardian) because of the Councillor's attendance at a Council meeting or meeting of a committee (of which he or she is a member), is entitled to be reimbursed the actual cost per hour or the prescribed amount as determined by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal whichever is the lesser amount.

Child care costs will not be paid for where the care is provided by a member of the immediate family or relative living in the same premises as the council member.

Claims must be made on the claim form provided and be accompanied by a receipt or invoice detailing the date, number of hours, rate and function attended and the details of the service provider.

### **2.3.2 Reimbursement of travel and parking expenses because of attendance at an authorised function, meeting of Council or committee**

It is noted that under Section 5.98(2)(a) of the Act and Regulations 31(1)(b) of the Administration Regulation, Councillors who incur travel expenses because of the Councillor's attendance at a Council meeting or meeting of a committee of which he or she is a member, is entitled to be reimbursed for travel from the person's place of residence or work to the meeting and back.

If transportation is provided by another Councillor then only that Councillor is entitled to claim the actual cost applicable.

The amount per kilometre to which the person would be entitled for that expense in the same circumstances in accordance with the WA Public Service Award 1992.

Parking costs are to be reimbursed at the actual cost upon production of a receipt.

## 2.4 Claim for Reimbursement

[CG-6-1 Form](#) is to be used for Councillor Travel Expense Claims

[CG-6-2 Form](#) is to be used for Councillor Child Care Expense Claims

All claims for reimbursement must be lodged with the Personal Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer and Mayor on the appropriate claim form, on a monthly basis, no later than fourteen (14) days after the final day of the period to which the claim relates.

In submitting claims for reimbursement the Councillor shall detail the date of the claim, particulars of the claim and nature of business, eg. the amount paid for child care costs, distance travelled, vehicle displacement and the total travelled in kilometres and certify the accuracy of such information.

Parking fees will only be reimbursed if receipts accompany claim. This should be accompanied by supporting documentation where applicable.

Expenses for the month of June are to be submitted by 15 July.

Failure to present claims within identified time periods will be considered by the CEO and may result in the non-payment of the claim particularly if the claim relates to a former financial period. Under no circumstances is any reimbursement to be made in connection with costs incurred for re-election to the office of Councillor.

## 2.5 Mayor's Entitlements

The CEO is to provide to the Mayor, at the City's cost, the following within the City's administration offices:

- The use of an office; the use of a City employee as a part time executive assistant to the extent considered appropriate by the CEO; and the use of a computer and telephone.
- In addition to the allowance in lieu of reimbursement of telephone expenses the CEO is to provide to the Mayor a mobile phone for City business calls only.

## 3. CONSEQUENCES

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

## 4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Council** is required annually at its budget deliberations to agree to maximum allowance limits for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors. The limits cannot exceed that prescribed annually by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal.

**Councillor** is required to complete their claim form within a timely manner and present to the Personal Assistant to the CEO and Mayor for processing and payment. Councillors are required to be able to substantiate expenditure at all times where reimbursement is required for out of pocket expenses.

**Personal Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer and Mayor** shall ensure that claims are processed promptly. Cross referencing of Councillor's attendance to meetings shall be undertaken to calculate travel claims and expenditure.

**Chief Executive Officer** shall ensure that allowances are prepared within agreed timeframes and paid to councillors in a timely manner.

## 5. REFERENCES TO RELATED DOCUMENTS

- *Local Government Act 1995 (as amended), sections 5.98, 5.98A and 5.99*
- *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996, regulation 5*
- *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996, regulations 31 and 32.*
- Public Service Award 1992
- SAT Website:  
<http://www.sat.wa.gov.au/LocalGovernmentElectedMembers/Pages/Default.aspx>
- Form CE-6-1 "Councillors Claim Form - Travel Expenses"
- Form CE-6-2 "Councillors Claim Form - Child Care Expenses"

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