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**POLICY TITLE COUNCIL EXPENSES POLICY**

**POLICY NUMBER POL/GOV004**

**1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the conditions under which expenses incurred by Councillors, and where required members of delegated committees while performing their civic, statutory and policy-making duties, are reimbursed or paid by Swan Hill Rural City Council (Council).

The reimbursement of expenses should provide a reduction of barriers to effective participation in Local Government by members of the community by providing support to reduce personal financial costs associated with civic leadership.

**2. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Councillors of Swan Hill Rural City Council and where required members of delegated committees under section 63 of the Local Government Act 2020.

**3. POLICY**

Councillors and members of delegated committees are entitled, under section 40 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act), to reimbursement of expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties.

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

Councillors and members of delegated committees will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses which the Council are satisfied:

- (a) are bona fide expenses;
- (b) have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of councillor or member of a delegated committee; and  
are reasonably necessary for the councillor or delegated committee member to perform that role.

Council must provide details of all reimbursements to the Audit and Risk Committee and quarterly to Council Meeting.

The following types of expenses will be reimbursed subject to the conditions stated below:

## Travel

The cost of travel where the Councillor attends a Council function, Council meeting or other function as an authorised representative of the Council including community meetings with the Councillor attending in their capacity as a Councillor of the Swan Hill Rural City Council.

Councillors must also comply with the travel by Councillors policy POL/GOV013 where that policy applies.

The cost of parking and toll fees will also be reimbursed.

## Accommodation

The reasonable costs of accommodation will be reimbursed or paid where an overnight stay is required.

## Child care

Council will reimburse the reasonable costs of child care where the provision of child care is reasonably required for a Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform their role. Such duties include the attendance of Council meetings and functions and meetings arising as a result the Councillor being appointed by the Council to an external body.

Payments for childcare services will not be made to a person who resides with the Councillor or delegated committee member; has any financial or pecuniary interest with the Councillor or delegated committee member; or has a relationship with the Councillor, delegated committee member or their partner.

## Carer Expenses

Council will reimburse the reasonable carer costs to those who are a carer in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the Carers Recognition Act 2012, where this care has been incurred as a result of the Councillor exercising their responsibilities as an elected Councillor. Such duties include the attendance of Council meetings and functions and meetings arising as a result the Councillor being appointed by the Council to an external body.

Payments for carer services will not be made to a person who resides with the Councillor or delegated committee member; has any financial or pecuniary interest with the Councillor or delegated committee member; or has a relationship with the Councillor, delegated committee member or their partner.

## Legal Expenses

Council will reimburse the reasonable cost of obtaining legal advice and the cost of defending an action where the criteria as set out in the Council Expenses Procedure PRO/GOV004 are met.

## Advanced Payment

Councillors may request approval of CEO for advanced payment to cover travel costs. Councillors will be required to provide evidence and reconcile actual payments against expenses incurred.

## Expenses not covered by Council

The following expenses will not be paid or reimbursed by Council:

- Traffic and parking infringements
- Mini bar expenses
- The costs of operating a home office other than stationery and other support otherwise provided by Council
- Costs associated with personal grooming and apparel except for personal protective equipment which will be provided by Council
- Civil or criminal penalties imposed by a court tribunal or other competent jurisdiction
- Any costs associated with campaigning activities
- Alcohol

## **4. RELATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES/DOCUMENTS**

Councillor Code of Conduct

POL/GOV013 Travel by Councillors Policy

POL/CORP218 Information Technology acceptable use Policy

PRO/GOV004 Council Expenses Procedure

CPOL/GOV023 Public Transparency Policy

Governance Rules

## **5. RELATED LEGISLATION**

Local Government Act 2020

Carers Recognition Act 2012

## **6. DOCUMENT HISTORY**

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>	<b>Description of Change</b>
1.0	March 2001	Initial Release
1.1	August 2005	Review
1.2	July 2012	Review
1.3	August 2016	Review
2.0	August 2020	Review

**Signed:** Bill Moar

**Mayor**

**Date:** 20/08/2020