

Council Expense Policy

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Yarriambiack Shire Council encourages a working environment which promotes gender equality and models non-violent and respectful relationships.

1 Objective

This policy supports Councillors, staff, members of delegated committees and the Audit and Risk Committee to perform their role, as defined under the *Local Government Act 2020*, by ensuring that expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their role are reimbursed. The policy also provides guidance on:

- Entitlements.
- Allowances.
- Processes for reimbursement.
- Reporting requirements.

The policy is intended to ensure that Councillors, staff, members of delegated committees and the Audit and Risk Committee are supported to perform their duties without disadvantage.

2 Responsibility

The Mayor, Chief Executive Officer and **Chief Operating Officer** are responsible for ensuring compliance with this Policy and Procedure.

3 Scope

This policy applies to:

- Councillors of Yarriambiack Shire Council.
- Members of delegated committees of Yarriambiack Shire Council.
- Members of the Audit and Risk Committee of Yarriambiack Shire Council.
- Staff of Yarriambiack Shire Council.

Duties are those performed by a Councillor, staff member or committee member as a necessary part of their role, in achieving the objectives of Council.

These duties may include (but are not limited to):

- Attendance at meetings of Council and its Committees.
- Attendance at briefing sessions, workshops, civic events or functions convened by Council.
- Attendance at conferences, workshops and training programs related to the role of a Councillor, Mayor or Deputy Mayor, staff member or Committee member.
- Attendance at meetings, events or functions representing Council.
- Duties in relation to constituents concerning council business.

Members of delegated committees exercising powers of councillors, under delegation. This policy also applies to those members in the course of undertaking their role as delegated committee members.

4 Policy Statement

4.1 Councillors and Members of Delegated Committees

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.

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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 that are:

- Bona fide expenses and
- have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor and
- are reasonably necessary for the Councillor and member of a delegated committee to perform their role.

4.2 Staff

In the ordinary course of business Yarriambiack Shire Council staff may find it necessary to incur expenditure on behalf of the business or incur expenditure as a result of attending professional development and/or training away from their normal place of work.

Council will reimburse expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties.

4.3 Audit and Risk Committee

As a member of the Audit and Risk Committee it may be necessary to attend training and conferences that are specific to Local Government or travel to attend meetings.

Council will reimburse expenses reasonably incurred for travel.

Council will reimburse the cost of training and conferences as agreed by the Audit and Risk Committee via motion recorded in the meeting minutes.

4.4 Carer and dependent-related expenses

Council will provide reimbursement of costs where the provision of childcare is reasonably required for a Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform their role (s 41(2)(c)).

This applies to the care of a dependent, while the Councillor or delegated committee member is undertaking their official duties; and may include expenses such as hourly fees and booking fees, if applicable.

Council will provide reimbursement of costs where the provision of carer services is reasonably required when a Councillor or delegated committee member who is a carer (see **Definitions**) incurs reasonable expenses in the performance of their duties.

Payments for carer and 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.

4.5 Allowances

Allowances paid to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors is in accordance with section 39 of the Act. The entitlement to be received is determined by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal under the *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019*.

Council will pay a sitting fee to the Chair and Independent Members of an Audit and Risk Committee. This fee is set in accordance with the Audit and Risk Committee charter **and a resolution of Council, with the appointment of Committee member(s)**.

In addition, each independent member is entitled to claim ~~up to \$500.00 per annum in~~ travel expenses based on the kilometre rate set by the Commissioner of Taxation.

This Policy does not include staff allowances which are paid in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement and Council Policies.

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4.6 Tools, services and facilities

Council must make available to the Mayor and the Councillors the resources and facilities reasonably necessary to enable them to effectively perform their role (s42(1)).

Tools, services and facilities supplied by Yarriambiack Shire Council are listed in this document under Procedure section 1.6.

4.7 Report to Audit and Risk Committee

Council must provide details of all reimbursements paid to Councillors and delegated committee members to the Audit and Risk Committee (s40(2)).

Refer to Procedure, section 4 which outlines this process.

5 Definitions

Carer: A carer is defined under Section 4 of the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*.

Delegated Committee: Delegated committees are defined under section 63 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

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Procedure

6 Expense Reimbursement

6.1 Motor Vehicle and Travel

The Yarriambiack Shire Council Enterprise Agreement sets the reimbursement rate for staff travel. This reimbursement rate is also applied to Councillor and committee member travel reimbursement claims.

Travel will be reimbursed for the distance of the primary route identified by Google maps for the route travelled.

6.2 Councillor Remoteness Factor

The Remoteness Factor Allowance is paid in addition to the general motor vehicle travel allowance as follows:

Where a Councillor normally resides more than 50 kilometres by the shortest possible practicable road distance, from the location or locations specified for the conduct of ordinary, special or committee meetings of the council or any municipal or community functions which have been authorised by council resolution for the Councillor to attend, they shall be entitled to and shall be paid an additional allowance in accordance with the [Allowance Payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors \(Victoria\) Annual Adjustment Determination](#).

6.3 Conferences, Meetings, Training and Seminars

Council will provide and/or reimburse Councillors, delegated committee members, staff and the Audit and Risk Committee members to attend conferences, meetings, training or seminars which have been authorised by Yarriambiack Shire Council or as determined by the Chief Executive Officer and the Mayor as follows:

6.3.1 Registration fees

The payment of registration fees for attendance at approved conferences, seminars and training sessions.

6.3.2 Conference Dinner/Meals

Payment for the main conference seminar dinner, if not covered by registration cost, together with all meals, within reasonable limits, for the duration of the conference or seminar.

Refer to section 1.4 of this Procedure which outlines the amount to be reimbursed in relation to staff Meals.

6.3.3 Accommodation

The payment of accommodation costs on the following basis:

- Accommodation, dinner and breakfast costs.
- Any additional accommodation costs incurred as a result of the attendance of partners and/or children shall be borne by the attendee.

If payment is made by the individual, then the expenses can be claimed through the expense claim method. The accommodation reimbursement amount is capped at \$250 per night per individual, unless approved by the CEO or the Mayor in advance.

Council's preferred method of procuring accommodation, dinner, lunch and breakfast costs is via the purchase order system (refer to section 6.3.7).

6.3.4 Car Parking Fees

Council will meet the cost of the following car parking fees:

- Hotel/motel parking - additional car parking fees not included in accommodation cost.

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- Airport parking, costs included in the parking of a private vehicle at an airport for the duration of the conference, meeting, training or seminar.
- Commercial car parking fees associated with attending meetings or functions on behalf of Council.

6.3.5 Public Transport Fees

Council will reimburse or pay the cost of rail/bus/tram fees when the travel relates directly to attendance at an approved conference, training, meeting, or seminar session.

6.3.6 Toll Fees

Council will reimburse or pay the cost of toll fees when the travel relates directly to attendance at an approved conference, training, meeting, or seminar session.

6.3.7 Bookings via Executive Assistant to the CEO

Wherever possible, conference and seminar registrations, accommodation and car parking should be organised and paid for directly by Council.

The Executive Assistant to the CEO is available to assist Councillors and committee members with such bookings.

6.4 Meals

Where the employee is required to work outside the Yarriambiack Shire Council service district, or is required to have an overnight stay in the district or outside the district, the employee shall be entitled to reasonably incurred costs associated with meals.

Where the meals are part of the provision of accommodation then these should be included in the hotel account. Where these costs are independent of the provisions of accommodation claim, an employee is to complete the [Expense Reimbursement Form](#) and submit to the Manager for approval, before being submitted to the Payroll / Accounts Payable Officer for processing. The cost of meal reimbursement is capped at **\$40 for breakfast, \$40 for lunch and \$60 for dinner**.

6.5 Councillors – Mobile Phone Use

Councillors will be supplied with a mobile phone by Council to undertake Councillor duties.

6.6 Councillor Support Facilities

Council will provide support facilities to Councillors. The facilities provided is for use by the Councillor in the conduct of their duties of office. All equipment provided shall remain the property of the Council and shall be returned within two weeks of retirement or termination of office. Councillors must abide by the Yarriambiack Shire Council [Information Technology Communication Acceptable Use Policy](#).

The following will be supplied:

- Ipad or laptop computer.
- Internet data.

6.7 Out of Pocket Expenses for Staff

Reasonably incurred out of pocket expenses such as the cost of professional membership shall be reimbursed by completing an [Expense Reimbursement Claim Form](#). All expenditure must be approved prior to being reimbursed. The approval method maybe via a purchase order requisition or a [Professional Development and Staff Training Application Form](#).

6.8 Alcohol

Under no circumstances will the cost of alcohol be reimbursed.

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6.9 Relevance to the Enterprise Agreement

For Staff related matters, to the extent that it applies, this document should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the Yarriambiack Shire Council Enterprise Agreement.

6.10 Councillor General Provisions

Only authorised Council business is to be included in the calculation of any expenses to be paid.

7 Making a Claim for Reimbursement

- a) All claims must be made on the approved [Expense Reimbursement Form](#), available via the Intranet or the Executive Assistant to the CEO (or the CEO's nominee).
- b) Original receipts must be attached for all claims (credit card receipts will not be accepted).
- c) Where the provider of the goods or service is registered for GST a tax invoice must be obtained and provided (without this the GST component of the cost cannot be reimbursed).
- d) Staff expense reimbursement claims must be approved by the applicable Manager in accordance with financial delegation.
- e) Committee and Councillor reimbursements must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer and the Mayor.
- f) Claims must be lodged with the Payroll and Accounts Payable Officer in a timely manner. Claims more than three months old from date of purchase will not be accepted.
- g) Reimbursements will be processed via electronic funds transfer.

8 Making a Claim for an Allowance or Entitlement

On commencement as a Councillor, Mayor or Independent Audit and Risk Committee Member, the incumbent will be required to complete a [Commencement with Council Form](#). The form will include populating personal details including bank account details for their allowance or entitlements to be paid.

The [Expense Reimbursement Claim Form](#) is to be completed when a claim for travel or a bona fide expense is required.

9 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

An annual report of all Councillor and delegated committee member expenses will be provided to Council, and the Council's Audit and Risk Committee.

The report will include:

- Expenses incurred by Councillors during the financial year.
- Reimbursement claims made by Councillors during the financial year.
- Reimbursements made to Councillors during the year.

Council commits to monitoring processes and decision making to understand the overall success of the policy's implementation.

A period review of the policy will be undertaken to ensure any changes required to strengthen or update the policy are made in a timely manner.

10 Related Policies, Procedures and Legislation

Council Policies:

- Governance Rules

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- Public Transparency Policy
- Information Privacy Policy
- Motor Vehicle Policy
- Information, Communication and Technology Acceptable Usage Policy
- Human Resource Policy and Guidelines Manual

Legislation:

- *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019 (Vic)*
- *Carers Recognition Act 2012*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Gender Equity Bill 2020*

11 Superseded Policies

- Council Expense Policy 2022
- Council Expense Policy 2020
- Councillor Expense Entitlement Policy 2017
- Human Resource Policy and Guideline Manual – Guideline – Expense Reimbursement

12 Consistency with Governance Principles Local Government Act 2020

Governance Principle	Section of policy where covered
(a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;	Policy, Section 1: Objective, Section 4: Policy Statement, Procedure, Section 6.2, Section 10: Related Policy, Procedure and Legislation.
(b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;	Policy and Procedure holistically, is aimed at ensuring financial management and internal controls are established to effectively manage the integrity of the expense reimbursement process.
(c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;	Policy and Procedure holistically, is aimed at ensuring financial management and internal controls are established to effectively manage the integrity of the expense reimbursement process.
(d) the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;	This policy and associated procedure identify the expense reimbursement of Audit and Risk Committee members, along with Councillors and staff. The internal control processes outlined assist

Governance Principle	Section of policy where covered
	with protecting the integrity of Council, with an aim of protecting the Reputational and Financial Strategic Risks of Council.
(e) innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued;	Council's review process Item 13 of the Procedure ensure the document is reviewed with a view of continuous improvement and review against legislative requirements.
(f) collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;	Council ensure the Expense Policy is aligned and evaluated against Local Government best practice guidance, and legislative frameworks such as the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019 (Vic) and the Local Government Act 2020.
(g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;	This policy and associated procedure identify the expense reimbursement of Audit and Risk Committee members, along with Councillors and staff. The internal control processes outlined assist with protecting the integrity of Council, with an aim of protecting the Reputational and Financial Strategic Risks of Council.
(h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;	This policy was developed in accordance with Local Government Victoria best practice guidance and with reference to the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019 (Vic) and the Local Government Act 2020.
(i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.	The policy and procedure outline throughout the document the details required for decision making and record keeping before expense reimbursements can be processed.

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, a Council must take into account the following supporting principles—

- (a) the community engagement principles;
- (b) the public transparency principles;
- (c) the strategic planning principles;
- (d) the financial management principles;
- (e) the service performance principles.

13 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in conjunction with its associated procedures every three years.

14 Legislative Context

This policy is to have reference to the requirements outlined in the Local Government Act 2020 and the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019 (Vic)

Council Approved Policy

Policy Adopted:	Ordinary Meeting 24 June 2020	Minute Page Number 142
	Policy Reviewed:	29 June 2022
	25 October 2023	

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Name:	
Position / Role:	
Date of Claim:	

Expense Claim

GL Code	Description	Amount (Exc. GST)	GST	TOTAL
			TOTAL	

Signature of Claimant:	
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Expense reimbursements will be paid by direct deposit to your nominated bank account as identified below:

Name of Account		BSB		Account Number	
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Approved:

Manager / Director Approval (Staff):		Signature:	
CEO Approval for Councillor / Committee Reimbursements	Tammy Smith	Signature:	
Mayor Approval for Councillor / Committee Reimbursements		Signature:	

Name:	
Position / Role:	
Date of Claim:	

Travel Claim

Destination (To and From)	Km's Travelled	Remoteness Factor Allowance	Was this the shortest and most direct route?			
		<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

TOTAL KMS	
@\$0.9681	
@\$0.7977	
REMOTENESS FACTOR	
TOTAL PAYMENT	

If Answering No to the shortest and most direct route, please state why the alternative route was taken:

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Signature of Claimant:	
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Expense reimbursements will be paid by direct deposit to your nominated bank account as identified below:

Name of Account		BSB		Account Number	
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Approved:

Manager / Director Approval (Staff):		Signature:	
CEO Approval for Councillor / Committee Reimbursements	Tammy Smith	Signature:	
Mayor Approval for Councillor / Committee Reimbursements		Signature:	

Commencement with Council Form

To be completed by Councillors, delegated Committee members and Audit and Risk Committee members.

Name	
Position / Role:	
Commencement Date:	
Address:	
Town:	
Postcode:	
Contact Phone Number:	

Bank Account Details

Please nominate name of account you wish for your entitlements to be paid into:

Name of Account	BSB	Account Number

Asset Allocation

Asset Type	Serial Number	Date Issued