Council Support and Resources Policy

Preamble

The elected Councillors are provided with a range of resources to enable them to effectively carry out their role. These resources include a Councillor allowance, administrative support, reimbursement of expenses associated with Council business, travel and accommodation entitlements, professional development opportunities and information technology support

Delegated committees play an important role in decision making and supporting good governance. Members of delegated committees are also provided with administrative support and reimbursement of expenses associated with their delegated role.

This policy outlines the resources and support to be provided by Council to Councillors and members of delegated committees as well as eligible expenditure that may be reimbursed in performing their duties as elected or delegated representatives as outlined in Section 63 of *The Local Government Act 2020.*

Policy objectives

- Provide Councillors and members of delegated committees with the resources required to carry out their role.
- Assist Council staff in providing the necessary resources, equipment and professional support to Councillors and members of delegated committees.

Councillors who are also members of delegated committees will continue to have access to all Councillor entitlements as set out in this policy.

Definitions

Delegated Committee.

As set out in the *Local Government Act 2020*, a delegated committee means:

(a) a delegated committee established by a Council under section 63; or

(b) a joint delegated committee established by 2 or more Councils under section 64; or

(c) a committee, other than a Community Asset Committee, exercising any power of a Council under this Act or any other Act delegated to the committee under this Act or any other Act;

Carer Expenses

Expenses incurred by a Councillor who is a carer in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the Carers Recognition Act 2012.

Policy statement

Councillor Entitlements

Mayoral and Councillor Allowance

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors are entitled to receive a Mayoral and Councillor allowance, pursuant to Section 39 of *the Local Government Act 2020*. The level of the allowance will be determined by Council after each general election, within the statutory limits set by the Minister for Local Government.

Administrative and Meeting Support

Councillors will attend regular meetings of Council both formal and informal. The following support will be provided:

- Council briefings occur on the first, second and fourth Wednesdays. All business papers will be distributed to Councillors for these meetings from the Governance and Property Department.
- Meetings of Council will occur on the third Wednesday of the month or alternative date by resolution of Council. Agendas will be provided to the Councillors from the Governance and Property Department. Minutes of these meetings will be taken by a member of the Governance and Property Department and made available to the public via Council's website.
- Councillor Support will manage all Councillor invitations received and should be the first point of contact.Councillor Support will be clear with the intent of the invitation, the nature of the event. For non-Council run events, partners are welcome to attend at their own expense.
- Council support will be provided by staff in the Governance team. Councillor Support Officer will manage all Councillor requests and responses will be provided in the Councillor Request System (One Council and/or ECM.
- All Councillor communication will be through the Councillor Support team or with a relevant General Manager or Manager.
- The Mayor and/or Councillors will be consulted on any Council purchases that impact their duties.

Travel

Councillors will be reimbursed for travel involved in attending any meeting of Council whether formal or informal. Travel costs will be reimbursed at the vehicle use allowance rates included in the Bass Coast Shire Council Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. Electric or hybrid vehicles will be reimbursed at the same rate as a four-cylinder vehicle. Travel reimbursement will apply for:

- Representing Council as an official delegate or Council representative at meetings, briefings, announcements and functions, including:
    - Events, State / Federal Government announcements, Ministerial visits

- Attending Council or Committee meetings or informal meetings of Council (briefings) called by the Mayor or CEO
- Civic events and community celebrations arranged and / or hosted by Bass Coast Shire Council
- Meetings or events arranged and/or hosted by community groups where Councillors are invited to attend as a Councillor, with or without formal duties

- Attending site inspections pertaining to a planning application or other matter that is likely to be considered by Council.
- Attending site inspections or locations in order to respond to concerns raised by constituents.
- Attendance at professional development opportunities.

Travel arrangements can be made for Councillors to travel with an officer when attending the same event.

A Council pool car may be booked by Councillor Supportfor a Councillor, subject to availability of a vehicle, for travel to/from official meetings, conferences, seminars, training and events. Any parking fees or public transport cost associated with travel at events will also be reimbursed.

Air Travel

Air travel will be by economy class unless determined by Council resolution.

- Council will pay up to a 10 per cent variation for a comparative flight at a comparable time for Councillors travelling on their nominated airline. Any costs over and above this will be paid by the Councillor.
- Airline tickets are not transferable and cannot be used for defraying or offsetting any other costs including the costs of other persons accompanying the Councillors.
- Councillors may upgrade the class of travel at their own expense.

Accommodation

Where the Councillor attends a conference, event or function that is held over more than one day, accommodation will be provided on successive nights. For example should a conference, event or function commence on a Friday and finish on Sunday, accommodation will be provided for the Friday and Saturday nights.

- Council will pay up to a 10 per cent variation for comparable hotels of a similar standard to that nominated by the conference, or previous conferences. If no hotel is nominated then accommodation will be a maximum four star single room accommodation. Any additional costs incurred as a result of extended stays, the attendance of partners and/or children and the cost of non-essential room extras suchas mini bar, tips or in-house movies will be paid by the Councillor.Where the Councillor attends a meeting, conference, event or function commencing at or before 11.00am which is located more than 100kms from the Wonthaggi Civic Centre at 76 McBride Avenue, Wonthaggi, accommodation is provided on the night

prior to the meeting.

- Requests for accommodation on the day the meeting, conference, event or function concludes will generally be supported where travel arrangements prevent the Councillor from returning to their usual place of residence by 7:00pm, subject to CEO approval.

Carer Expenses

Reimbursement of child and/or carer expenses for the care of a dependent will be provided where it is reasonably required for a Councillor to perform their role.

Reimbursement will only be paid for services where a receipt from the caregiver is received showing the dates and times the care was provided and will not exceed a Councillor's out of pocket expenses once any/all applicable subsidies are applied.

The care must not be provided by a person who is an immediate family member and/or normally or regularly lives with the Councillor or their partner; or has any financial or pecuniary interest with the Councillor or their partner.

Information Technology Support

Where possible, new equipment will be issued to Councillors at the beginning of the Council term.

Information Technology support for Councillors will include:

- A smartphone with voicemail facilities and hands free (Bluetooth) kit will be provided. The account for this mobile telephone will be paid for by Council.
- A computer with access to email and internet services and loaded with Microsoft Office and Anti-Virus software will be provided for use during the Council term. At the end of the term, all devices will be returned to factory settings and any private information will be deleted.
- Councillors will be provided with a Council email address. The Council email will be linked to the Council Outlook Calendar to allow for diary management by Councillor Support.
- Cases to protect the smartphone and tablet will be provided.
- Councillors will be provided with access to a printer located at the Wonthaggi Civic Centre or other approved facility.
- Council's IT department will provide support for Council provided equipment and software. If Councillors wish to use their own equipment, Council is unable to provide full IT Support.
- Council officers will provide support for virtual meetings/teleconferences where the meeting was initiated by Council. Council is unable to provide IT support to community groups or other organisations where Councillors are invited to attend.
- All confidential Council information stored on private devices must be deleted at the end of the Council term.

- All Council provided equipment must be returned to Council on the last business day prior to Council elections.
- Use of Council provided equipment and services are intended for Council use only, however it is recognised that some personal use may occur for practical purposes.
- Any information or portals that Council provide access to and content that is included remains the property of Council. Access to this information will be removed at the end of the Council term.

Uniform and Stationery

Councillors will be provided with uniform and stationery items that include:

- Standard stationery required to carry out Council duties, including but not limited to, diaries, notebooks and pens.
- Councillors can be provided with a Council embroidered jacket and rain jacket per term.Additional uniform items are available to be purchased by Councillors and will not be reimbursed by Council.
- Councillors will be provided with any required personal, protective equipment to enable them to fulfil their role.
- All unused stationery provided by Council must be returned to Council on the last business day prior to Council elections.

Mayoral Support

- The Mayor will be provided with a furnished Mayoral office.
- Reasonable private use of a medium sized, environmentally friendly vehicle with a five star safety rating and fuel card will be supplied upon request. Alternatively a fuel card could be provided if the Mayor wishes to drive their own vehicle.
- The Mayoral vehicle may not be used for other commercial employment or external business activities.
- The Mayor will be provided with a corporate purchase card to pay for Council business expenses incurred in carrying out Mayoral duties.

Professional Development

Councillor professional development is encouraged to develop and maintain Councillor skills and abilities with regard to effective community representation, decision making and strategic Council planning.

There are two avenues for Councillors to utilise professional development opportunities.

- Through a Councillor Induction Program.
- Through workshops, seminars, conferences, and other day training as offered by industry partners, local government networks, support organisations and internally. These are generally of a lower cost and do not entitle the attendee to a formal qualification. Council approval to attend these is not required, and arrangements will be coordinated by Councillor Support.

All costs associated with Councillor professional development will be recorded in the Councillor Expense Register.

Members of Delegated Committees

Administrative and Meeting Support

Members of delegated committees will attend regular formal meetings. Meeting frequency and meeting days will be determined when a delegated committee is formed.

The following support will be provided:

- All business papers, including formal meeting agendas, will be distributed to committee members from the Governance and Property Department.
- Minutes of Delegated Committee meetings will be taken by a Council officer and made available to the public via Council's website.
- All Committee member communication will be through the Governance and Property Department or the delegated committee officer contact.

Stationery and equipment

Members of delegated committees will be provided with standard stationery required to carry out their role. Members of delegated committees will be provided with any required personal, protective equipment to enable them to fulfil their role. Uniform items are not provided for members of delegated committees.

Other Reimbursements and requests for equipment

Reimbursements will be made to Councillors or members of a delegated committee where the cost of purchasing a ticket or paying a fee is associated with them performing their official role.

Councillors can request other equipment required to fulfil their role. Requests should be submitted through Councillor Support and will be subject to CEO approval.

Resources paid for by Councillors and members of delegated committees

Councillors must pay for all other costs associated with carrying out their responsibilities unless the Chief Executive Officer approves the payment of these expenses because of extenuating circumstances.

Payment and reimbursement of expenses

Claims for the reimbursement of costs must be submitted on the appropriate claim forms provided by Councillor Support team.

Receipts are required as proof of purchase for reimbursement. A statutory declaration is required for expenses totaling more than $50.00 where a receipt has been lost or not provided,Reporting of expenses

A report of expenses of Councillors and members of delegated committees will be reported quarterly to Council and to each Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

Additional documents

The *Bass Coast Shire Council Enterprise Bargaining Agreement - Part B* relates to the payment of travel expenses, forms part of this Policy and can be viewed by contacting Council staff.

Reference to other documents

Local Government Act 2020

Carers Recognition Act 2012

Councillor Code of Conduct

IT Usage Policy

Privacy and Data Protection Policy

Review process

Each new Council will review this Policy within six months of the general election. However, Council can review and change this Policy at any time.

Accountability process

All claims for the reimbursement of expenses will be authorised for payment by a representative from the Governance and Property Department.

Approval

Approved by Council at its meeting held on	Date:
Signed by the Mayor, Cr Clare Le Serve	