



## ELECTED MEMBER ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES

Type:	Council – Elected Member		
Owner:	Council		
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer		
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Records Number:	253374	Council/CEO Decision:	<b>OMC-2026-97</b>
Legislation Reference:	<i>Section 45, 106 and 109 (1) and (2) of the Local Government Act 2019 Section 7B of the Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act 2006</i>		

### 1 PURPOSE

Elected Members are entitled to be paid allowances, be reimbursed for reasonable expenses and provided with the facilities needed for them to be able to perform the role of an Elected Member.

The purpose of this policy is to provide details on the provision of Elected Member allowances and reimbursement of expenses payable to provide the necessary support to Elected Members to effectively carry out their roles, encourage diverse representation on Council, and ensure compliance with *the Local Government Act 2019*.

The policy is to:

- set the council member allowances eligible for claim
- set out council member entitlements for payment or reimbursement of reasonable expenses for travel and accommodation necessary for attending council meetings and business of Council in accordance with a prior resolution.
- set out council member entitlements with being provided with other reasonable expenses and non-monetary benefits incurred or required as a result of undertaking official duties.
- identify the types of training or conferences that may be attended or undertaken by a council member using the professional development allowance.

### 2 SCOPE

This policy applies to elected members with Katherine Town Council.

### 3 DEFINITIONS

**Allowance** means a benefit, financial, material, or otherwise, payable and/or provided to an Elected Member in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2019* or the *Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act 2006*.

**CEO** means Chief Executive Officer.

**Elected Members** are the Mayor and Councillors who are elected by the community - noting that the legislation makes clear distinctions between different categories of Elected Members for the purpose of allowances, benefits, facilities, and services.

**Incidental expenses** mean minor but necessary expenses associated with your council-related travel – for example, a car parking fee, bus ticket or a charge for using the phone or internet for work-related purposes at your overnight accommodation. The reasonable amount for incidentals applies in full to each day of travel covered by the allowance, without the need to apportion for any part-day travel on the first and last day.

**Mandatory Training** means training courses for members approved by the Agency, must be about the responsibilities of being a member of council under the Act, and must be completed within 12 months of election.

**Non-monetary** means rewards that do not involve money.

**Other council business** means carrying out duties in relation to an appointed role (e.g. LGANT delegate), attending a conference, workshop, seminar, training session or other council business approved by council resolution; or carrying out other official duties for the Council.

**Professional Development** means education, training, or skill development engaged in for career progression. This can range from keeping up to date with changes and trends in local government, to education and conferences to learn new skills to advance your role.

**Reasonable** means appropriate or fair.

**Reimbursement** means repayment, in arrears, with sufficient documentation as required for expenses incurred by the elected member related directly to the approved business, for example taxi fares if no vehicle or hire car is included in the travel, and not for any personal expenses incurred.

## 4 DETAILS

Katherine Town Council will provide allowances and reimbursement for expenses to Elected Members in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2019*, the Northern Territory of Australia Remuneration Tribunal Determination of Allowances for Members of Local Councils, ministerial guidelines and relevant Council policy. Payments are limited to items expressly stated in legislation and/or this policy. Council determines payment amounts or reimbursement of other reasonable expenses when adopting the budget for each financial year.

### 4.1 ELECTED MEMBER ALLOWANCES

Katherine Town Council will pay all Elected Members the following allowances in accordance with the Remuneration Tribunal Determination of Allowances for Members of Local Councils Report on Determination relevant to the financial year.

The Elected Member Allowances (excluding the Professional Development Allowance) are to be paid in arrears by electronic funds transfer on a monthly basis to the nominated account via TFN (PAYG not withheld).

Council must publish the amounts of the allowances payable by the council on its website.

#### 4.1.1 Extra meeting and Activity allowance

From the 1 July 2026, Extra meeting/ Activity allowance may be accessed by the Deputy Mayor and Councillors for attendance at the following meetings, activities and functions for which they have been appointed as the member (or attending for the appointed member when they are not in attendance):

- attendance at Special Meetings of Council, Council Advisory Committee meetings and other council committees established by Council resolution

- attendance at meetings as the approved delegate for council by council resolution
- attendance at any function representing the Mayor on official Council duties
- attendance at functions as an invited representative of council approved by council resolution
- attendance at approved extra meetings of Council for planning, briefing or information sessions

If any eligible meeting already attracts an allowance paid by another body or organisation, Council will not duplicate the Extra Meeting Allowance for attendance at that meeting. To be eligible for extra meeting allowance the Elected Member must attend at least 75 per cent of the duration of the meeting or activity.

The Extra Meeting Allowance will be paid in accordance with the Determination of Allowances for Members of Local Councils, calculated each year during the budget process and displayed in the Municipal Plan.

Claims for Extra Meeting Allowance when they relate to Council-minuted meetings will be processed monthly based from attendance records in the meeting minutes. Other eligible claims will be paid on the approval of the Elected Member Activities reported each month after being approved by Council resolution. All claims for the financial year must be paid by the last payment run for the end of the financial year. The Mayor is not entitled to receive Extra Meeting Allowance; as it is provided for and included in the Allowance for the role.

#### **4.1.2 Provision of Motor vehicle**

The Mayor is entitled to the provision of a Council supplied and maintained vehicle and the provision of such motor vehicle will be provided at the discretion of the Mayor. From the 1 July 2026, the Mayor may elect to receive a Principle Member Provision of Motor Vehicle Allowance instead of the a council vehicle as per Remuneration Tribunal Determination of Allowances for Members of Local Councils Report on Determination.

The use of a dedicated council vehicle will be for travel within the Northern Territory. Travel outside the Northern Territory may be granted by requesting permission from the Chief Executive Officer. Costs of travel outside the Northern Territory for personal purposes should be covered by the Mayor.

Any traffic infringement notices and fines are the individual responsibility of the driver of the vehicle.

### **4.2 TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION**

Council is committed to ensuring that travel and accommodation arrangements, including payment and reimbursement of reasonable expenses, are administered in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

Travel Allowance is when travel is undertaken that may be away from the ordinary place of work or home of a member. Travel allowance will only come into effect when a member has succeeded duration of travel over a twelve-hour period. Members who are required to stay away from home overnight on approved Council business, will be entitled to Travel Allowance.

#### **4.2.1 Approved process**

All travel and accommodation arrangements for approved Council business must be submitted on the Elected Members Travel Allowance Form in its entirety and approved by the CEO. Elected Members must provide all information to the Governance Officer who will support the process. The form acquittal process must be completed and approved by the CEO within seven days of returning from travel.

#### **4.2.2 Council meetings**

If a council member is required to travel more than 50 km (each way) from their place of usual residence within the council area to attend a council meeting, the council member is entitled to payment or reimbursement of reasonable expenses for necessary travel and accommodation.

#### **4.2.3 Other council business**

If a council member is required to travel to attend a conference, workshop, seminar, training session or other council business as an approved council delegate or representing the Mayor which has been approved by council resolution, the council member is entitled to payment or reimbursement of reasonable expenses for necessary travel and accommodation.

For travel and accommodation expenses in relation to the use of a council member's professional development allowance, please refer to the section 4.4 Professional Development Allowance.

#### **4.2.4 Registration Fees, Accommodation and Travel bookings**

If the council member requires accommodation, it will be booked and paid for by the Council. Every effort must be made to ensure that the accommodation cost is at, or below, the amount set by the ATO Taxation Determination for the destination.

Where a council member chooses to self-provide private accommodation at a location, such as with friends or family, for which no payment was made to a commercial operator, the applicable payable rate will be a private accommodation allowance of \$45 per night. This is a flat rate to assist with any contribution to the household. Travel allowance for meals and incidentals are payable.

Camping allowance is payable to a council member who is required to be away overnight at a location where no commercial accommodation is available and must stay in a camp. The applicable rate is \$45 per night. Personal procurement of camping equipment remains the responsibility of the council member. Full travel allowances for meals and incidentals are payable.

Air travel is to be by the most reasonably economic means available and shall not include business or first class. If air travel is required, it will be booked and paid by the Council.

Car rental reservations will be booked and paid by the Council, who will select the best-priced vehicle.

Council will pay registration fees for any eligible business approved by council resolution.

#### **4.2.5 Mileage allowance**

Council vehicles are preferred for official travel. Special circumstances must exist for a council member to use their own private vehicle for council business (for example, when no council vehicle is available). The use of the private vehicle must be communicated to the CEO prior to travel. Mileage allowance will be paid in accordance with the Remuneration Tribunal Determination of Allowances for Members of Local Councils Report on Determination Vehicle Allowance where a council member uses their own private vehicle to attend a approved council meeting or council business in accordance with a council and are required to stay away from home overnight.

Mileage allowances cannot be claimed by passengers.

Council will not take responsibility for any damage relating to use of private vehicles. It is the responsibility of the owner of the vehicle to ensure they have appropriate insurance prior to use. Insurance and vehicle registration verification must accompany the mileage allowance claim.

#### **4.2.6 Traffic infringement notices and fines**

Traffic infringement notices and fines are the individual responsibility of the driver of the vehicle. Any traffic infringement notices, or fines incurred whilst the vehicle is in control of the council member must be paid by the council member.

#### **4.2.7 Travel allowance**

The amount payable for travel allowance (meals and incidentals) is to be in accordance with the ATO Taxation Determination.

All non-essential additional expenses such as telephone calls, room service or mini-bar supplies are the responsibility of the council member. Meal allowances are not to be paid when the meal is included in the cost of the meeting, conference, or other event.

#### **4.2.8 Travel Meals and Accommodation**

Council has determined the following times for payable meals:

- Leave for travel before or at 7:00am – Entitled to a breakfast allowance
- Leave for travel after 7:00am No entitlement for a breakfast allowance
- Leave for travel before 11:59am or arrive at 1pm – Entitled to a lunch allowance
- Leave for travel after 12pm – No entitlement for lunch allowance.
- Arrive home (Katherine) before 7:00pm - No entitlement for a dinner allowance
- Arrive home at or after 7:00pm – Entitled to dinner allowance

Incidental claims are per each full 24 hour period.

Where an Elected Member is required to travel on a Saturday, Sunday or outside their ordinary working hours, the traveller will receive incidentals and relevant meal allowances.

#### **4.2.9 Accompanying partner**

Travelling council members may be accompanied by a spouse or partner and share accommodation, subject to Council not incurring any additional expense.

#### **4.2.10 Payment of allowance**

Travel allowances may be paid in advance of travel commencing, or as a reimbursement following the completion of travel.

If an accommodation cost is to be reimbursed, it must be for commercial accommodation such as a motel, a hotel or serviced apartment.

Alcohol purchases will not be reimbursed.

Within seven days of returning from travel, the Elected Member must submit the Travel Allowance Form acquittal section and, if applicable, a Reimbursement Form including all documentation substantiating the expenditure completed in its entirety to the Governance Officer.

#### **4.2.11 Cancellation and non-attendance**

Where travel arrangements need to be changed or cancelled, the council member must inform the CEO and the Governance Officer as soon as possible to minimise any financial loss to the Council.

Where a council member fails to attend all or part of the business for which travel has been organised and paid, the council member is to notify the CEO as soon as practicable and provide the CEO with the reason(s) for non-attendance.

The CEO is to report any non-attendance at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council.

### **4.3 OTHER REASONABLE EXPENSES AND NON-MONETARY BENEFITS**

Council is committed to providing non-monetary benefits to support council members to carry out their official duties in an accountable and transparent manner that ensures the proper use of council assets and resources.

#### **4.3.1 General expenses and benefits**

Once per term of the Council, each council member will be provided with the following non- monetary benefits:

- an electronic device, such as an iPad or a tablet, with sufficient internet data to carry out their official duties.
- a council email address with calendar facility. A council member's calendar shall be available to other council members and council staff to facilitate the smooth running of council operations and as a record of their activities relating to undertaking official duties.
- An Elected Members Portal with dedicated access to Council business papers.
- Business Cards.
- name badge for their use.

Council members who cease their position within Council within seven days are required to return all portable attractive items that have been issued throughout their tenure to carry out their official duties. Portable attractive items must be accounted for in Council's minor asset register.

Council members wishing to use council resources, such for photocopying and printing, must arrange for the use of these resources through the CEO. Council resources may not be used for personal documents or for circulars, publications or election material.

### 4.3.2 Additional benefits for Mayor

The Mayor is entitled to the following additional benefits to assist in undertaking official duties:

- mobile phone and suitable telecommunication plan;
- an office; and
- secretariat assistance (as agreed with the CEO).

### 4.4 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ALLOWANCE

Katherine Town Council is committed to ensuring that elected members have access to ongoing professional development to assist them to develop and maintain the skills and knowledge required to effectively perform their roles and responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 2019*.

Council is committed to recognising the most appropriate types of conferences and training opportunities that enable elected members to ensure they can fulfil their statutory roles and responsibilities. Professional development is an opportunity for elected members to develop and maintain the skills and knowledge required to effectively perform their roles and responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 2019*.

An elected members role is primarily strategic, representing the collective interests of residents, ratepayers and the local community, and they should not become involved in the day-to-day operations of the council.

To allow Councillors to make an effective transition from campaigning to governing, elected members will be provided professional development opportunities.

All elected members will receive an induction workshop as soon as possible after a council election. Under the Act, governance or other mandatory training may be required to be undertaken by Elected Members, within an agreed timeframe.

Throughout their term, elected members will receive ongoing governance training, as well as additional training activities addressing specific training needs identified by elected members and management.

An elected member of a council is entitled to be paid the professional development allowances determined by the Remuneration Tribunal under section 7B of the *Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act 2006*.

The Professional Development Allowance is to be used to cover the cost of travel to the course or conference (including vehicle, travel allowance and travel time), course or conference fees, meals, and accommodation for the duration of the course or conference.

Payment of the Professional Development Allowance is subject to approval by Council. Conditions of payment include confirmation of attendance for at least 75 per cent of the duration of the event unless non-attendance is supported by a medical certificate (in the case of illness or injury).

#### 4.4.1 Types of Conference and Training

The professional development allowance may be expended by approval from the Council, in relation to attending or undertaking the following types of conference and training within the Northern Territory or facilitated online:

- mandatory training relevant to being a council member;
- course of study or other training course relevant to performance as a council member;
- training, mediation or counselling recommended or ordered as part of a decision relating to a Code of Conduct complaint;
- training, mediation or counselling recommended by the Mayor or CEO; or
- a conference, seminar, symposium, expo or other similar event on a topic or function directly related to local government.

Costs for travel, accommodation and meals that are claimed in relation to use of the professional development allowance are to be paid from the council member's professional development allowance.

#### 4.4.2 High-Cost Training Courses

If a council member is attending a training course that exceeds the professional development allowance available in the current financial year:

- any remaining professional development allowance in the current financial year is to be expended to partially pay for the training course; and
- any remaining professional development allowance in the current financial year is to be expended to partially pay for the training course; and
- the outstanding cost of the training course may be expended against the professional development allowance of the council member in future financial years (only within the term of the Council).

Expenditure of the professional development allowance in future financial years will only be done on a reimbursement basis to a council member who has personally paid the remaining cost of the training course.

Access to reimbursement is subject to:

- the council member remaining to be a council member in the future financial year(s) when a claim for reimbursement is made; and
- any changes in the maximum amount of professional development allowance available in the future financial year(s) (which may reduce the reimbursement amount available).

Total amount claimable each year is the total of two years, being based on an annual allowance, plus one year drawn in advance or one years remaining balance from a previous year. The maximum amount claimable by any councillor is the total sum of the one year for each year of the councillors elected term.

Proof of completion for each stage of the course is required before further payments can be claimed.

## 5 ASSOCIATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

Elected Members Code of Conduct

Accountable Forms Policy

Form – Travel Allowance - Elected Member

Form – Elected Member Reimbursement

## 6 REFERENCES AND RELATED LEGISLATION

*Local Government Act 2019*

*Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act 2006*

NT Remuneration Tribunal - Determination of Allowances for Members of Local Councils

*Australian Tax Office's Taxation Determination - Income tax: what are the reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expense amounts?*

### Revision History

Version	Revision date	Details of change	Responsible officer
1		<p>Policy created combining the following policies into one policy with the following changes to those policies and inclusion of all allowance entitlement information.</p> <p><b>Reasonable Expenses for Travel and Accommodation by Elected Members Policy</b> - Review included administrative amendments to remove duplication of information and improve flow of policy, inclusion of Insurance and vehicle registration verification requirements, and included Accountable Forms Policy.</p> <p><b>Other Reasonable Expenses and Non-Monetary Benefits Received by Elected Members Policy</b> - Review included minor administrative amendment, addition of Remuneration Determination, and An Elected Members Portal with dedicated access to Council business papers and Business Cards.</p> <p><b>Elected Member Professional Development Allowance Policy</b> - Reviewed included administrative amendments, included section specific to professional development allowance, and removed reference not directly related to professional development policy purpose in the details section.</p>	CEO
2			
3			