



Interstate and Overseas Travel and Accommodation Policy

Policy Owner	Governance & Corporate Accountability Governance and Corporate Performance
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Please check Council's Intranet to ensure this is the latest Revision

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Purpose

At times, Councillors and Officers may be required to travel interstate or overseas and whilst Council is supportive of this endeavour, Councillors and Officers need to ensure at all times, accountability of public money is maintained, and that conference and travel arrangements are administered in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible.

This Policy applies to all Councillors and Officers requiring travel and accommodation for Council business and as part of their official Council duties including:

- Conferences, promotional tours, seminars, events, meetings and workshops;
- Training outside the Shire;
- Travel and accommodation associated with such attendance; and
- All other necessary incidental/out of pocket expenses associated with such attendance.

Scope

The *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015* require Council to maintain and have available for public inspection, a register of overseas and interstate travel (other than interstate travel by land for less than three days) by Council staff and Councillors.

Councillors and Officers who have travelled interstate or overseas in an official capacity shall within seven working days of returning, provide details of their travel on the 'Interstate/Overseas Travel Report Form (Attachment 1) and lodge the form with the Governance and Corporate Accountability Unit for inclusion in the Travel Register.

Councillors attending any approved activity must provide Council with a written report on their attendance. The report must be submitted to a Council meeting as soon as practicable and can be part of the monthly delegates report. Council staff are required to submit a written report to their Directors.

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Ensure Council maximises the value of seminar, conference and/or course attendance;
- Determine the approval processes for all interstate and overseas travel by Councillors and Officers in an official capacity;
- Outline the process of reimbursement of expenses associated with such travel;
- Ensure Council complies with the Act; and
- Ensure the statutory register of overseas or interstate travel is maintained in accordance with the Regulations.

Policy

1.1 General Responsibilities

Councillors and Officers who incur expenditure in the course of Council business travel are responsible for ensuring:

- appropriate approvals have been obtained prior to travel;
- travel documentation is completed in full and submitted on time;
- all expenditure incurred during travel is properly accounted for and relates to the purpose of the travel and is accompanied by the relevant tax receipts; and
- arrangements for all travel and accommodation are made in accordance with this Policy.

1.2 Approval in Advance

Approval for all interstate and overseas travel by a Councillor/s should be by resolution of the Council via a Council report. The Council report must identify the following:

- background;
- the purpose of the travel;
- how the travel meets Council's objectives in line with the Council Plan;
- the benefits to Council and/or Mitchell Shire;
- proposed costs (airfare, accommodation, conference fees, meals, etc); and
- nomination of the Councillor/s that should undertake such travel.

Type of travel	Approval process
Interstate	Councillors must obtain approval in advance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• by resolution of the Council; or• where this is not possible, from the Mayor, after consultation with the CEO. Officers must obtain approval in advance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• from their Director
Overseas	Must obtain approval in advance by resolution of the Council.

In the event that timeframes do not permit for approval in advance (such as arrangements for a deputation to a member of Parliament) by formal resolution of Council, approval must be sought from the Mayor in consultation with the CEO.

If a Councillor goes overseas, of their own accord, they are not to represent Council in any official way, without prior approval via a council resolution.

1.3 Travel and Accommodation

Air Travel

Flights are to be economy class flights where possible. Staff should attempt to source the best price and conditions when booking flights.

Accommodation

Where Councillors or Officers attend 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 afternoon and finish on Sunday at 12.00pm, accommodation will be provided for the Friday and Saturday nights only. In the case that for OHS issues it is not safe for an Councillor or Officer to travel the full way home, an additional nights accommodation will be provided.

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 such as mini bar or in-house movies shall be borne by Councillors and Officers.

Travel Insurance

Councillors and Officers are encouraged to take out travel insurance, especially for any overseas travel. Insurance cover will be taken out on behalf of the Councillor or Officer when making travel arrangements. Should a Councillor or staff member take out their own insurance, receipts are required in all cases and charges will be reimbursed by Council.

1.4 Other Expenses

Transport

Taxis/Uber/Car hire should only be used where they are the most efficient means of transport available and payment should be made by the traveller. Receipts are required in all cases. Charges will be reimbursed by Council.

Food and drinks

The majority of meals will be covered in the conference or event fee. Any other meals e.g.: dinners not included in the conference fee will be reimbursed. Council will not reimburse the purchase of coffee, alcohol or snacks.

1.5 Non Allowable Expenditure

Council will not reimburse expenditure in relation to the following items:

- Alcohol;
- Snacks;
- Any costs associated with accommodation that are outside room and breakfast (e.g.: mini bar, laundry, tips and gratuities);
- Airline club fees;
- Excess baggage claims;
- Any items lost or stolen;
- Tourism related costs (e.g.: day trips, excursions, activities, hire of bikes or boats etc);
- Reading materials (including newspapers, magazines, books etc);
- Traffic, parking or speeding fines;
- Travel costs not associated with the conference or event;
- In-flight or in-house movies or entertainment costs;
- Personal gifts, goods, services or souvenirs purchased; or
- Costs incurred for family or other persons travelling with Councillors and Officers (including meals, travel, incidentals etc).

Attendance by Spouse/Partner at Seminars and Conferences

Attendance at any seminar or conference by a Councillor's or Officer's spouse/partner shall be at the expense of the Councillor or Officer in line with the following:

- Prior approval has been given by Council or the Mayor in consultation with the CEO.

1.6 Injury or Illness

Councillors or Officers who suffer from an injury or illness preventing them from attending a course, conference or workshop particularly where travel is involved should notify the Mayor and/or Director or CEO, preferably with enough notice for Council to either substitute an alternative Councillor or Officer or to cancel the intended travel and accommodation arrangements and any associated fees.

Failure to inform Council of non-attendance may result in Council seeking reimbursement.

Definitions

Personal Expense	Where pre-approved expenses are incurred by Councillors and Officers and meet the requirements of the Policy for reimbursement. <i>They must be accompanied by an official tax receipt.</i>
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Responsibilities

Governance and Corporate Accountability	Maintain the Interstate and Overseas Travel Register Ensure legislative requirements are met, research; coordinate consultation, review and update of the Policy	Ongoing
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Related Documents

- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct

Monitoring and Evaluation

Governance and Corporate Accountability will ensure that this Policy is reviewed as required and as a result of changes to applicable legislation.



PUBLIC REGISTER

Travel Register - Form

Travel information for the purposes of Regulation 12(a) of the Local Government Regulations 2015 which requires a Council to make available for public inspection details of overseas or interstate travel, (with the exception of interstate travel by land for less than 3 days) undertaken in an official capacity by Councillors or any member of Council staff in the previous 12 months.

Name:.....

Title:.....

City and State of Travel:

Country of Travel (if applicable):

Purpose of Travel:

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Written report submitted to Council or Director (cc Governance & Corporate Accountability):

Date of Travel: From: ____/____/____ To: ____/____/____

Airfares	\$
Conference fees	\$
Accommodation	\$
Meals	\$
Other	\$
	Total Cost \$

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please return this form to Governance & Corporate Accountability