

Elected members expenses, facilities and support policy

Policy No. 1100.100.E.R

1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline expenses that can be reimbursed, and facilities and support provided to Elected Members to enable them to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2019* (NT) (the Act).

2 Scope

This policy applies to the allocation and processing of requests for Elected Member allowances, facilities and support.

3 Policy statement

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.

3.1 Elected Member allowances

Each year the Minister for Local Government determines the maximum allowance rate.

City of Darwin will pay all Elected Members the following allowances in accordance with the Remuneration Tribunal report and Determination No.1 of 2024 (the Determination):

- Councillor allowance
- Extra meeting allowance
- Professional development allowance
- Vehicle allowance

Document 0017.001.I.N Ordinary Elected Member Expenses Guideline and document 0017.002.I.N. Deputy Lord Mayor Expenses Guideline outline:

- the eligibility criteria for the various allowance types
- how to submit a claim
- critical payment schedule dates.

Elected Members are to complete and sign an allowance claim each month, on the approved form. This must be submitted no later than the second business day of the month, for the month prior. Allowances will be paid on or before the fifth business day of the month.

Elected Members will be e-mailed remittance advice stating:

- the allowance type paid for that month
- year to date total
- deductions
- net payment totals
- extra meetings for which an allowance was paid that month.

In the event of any published revisions to the Determination, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will notify all Elected Members prior to the end of the next payment cycle and provide an updated version of the reference document.

Extra meeting allowance

To be eligible for extra meeting allowance the Elected Member must attend for at least 75% of the duration of the meeting.

The maximum amount payable for any one day is capped. The total extra meeting allowance per financial year is capped.

3.2 Reimbursement of expenses

Approval to travel

Elected Members must apply to the CEO for approval to travel for a professional development activity such as a conference, workshop, seminar, or relevant training session at the Elected Member's expense.

Elected Members must book their own travel for professional development activities and submit a claim for reimbursement, up to the professional development limit, with the Councillor and Committees Support Officer.

Elected Members must apply to the CEO for approval to travel for approved Council business.

Travel expenses

Travel bookings for approved Council business will be made via the Councillor and Committees Support Officer who will:

- book travel via City of Darwin’s contracted travel supplier
- maintain travel records including:
 - flights
 - accommodation
 - transfers
 - meals.

Where costs are unable to be pre-paid prior to travel, Elected Members may seek reimbursement post-travel using the form provided.

To make a claim for daily allowances, Elected Members must submit a completed daily travel calculator form along with tax invoices and any other evidence.

If Elected Members receive a daily allowance in accordance with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), then Elected Members are responsible for ensuring receipts are obtained and a claim made via their personal annual tax return.

City of Darwin will pay for economy class flights for Elected Members and business class for the Lord Mayor or Acting Lord Mayor.

Flights will be booked with the best available carrier at the most suitable time. If Elected Members accrue Frequent Flyer or airlines membership points as part of the Council travel, they are permitted to be retained for personal use by Elected Members.

Elected Members may request that flights be booked in business class but will be invoiced for the difference between the cost of the economy class fare and the cost of the business class fare on the same flight at the time of booking.

Should an Elected Member choose to change or alter a booking for personal reasons, any additional costs will be paid by the Elected Member.

Elected Members are entitled to book and claim for travel for themselves only. Family may travel with the Elected Member and share accommodation provided this incurs no extra cost for City of Darwin.

International travel

International travel by Elected Members requires approval by resolution of Council.

If an international flight exceeds 8 hours duration, Elected Members may be booked to travel business class.

Claims for expenses incurred by an Elected Member for or during international travel, including international currency can be made upon return using a travel claim form.

Elected Members must ensure that they are aware of all related costs prior to travelling.

Travel insurance

City of Darwin provides travel insurance cover to all Elected Members and, in some cases, partners, on approved Council business and professional development.

Meals and incidentals

Elected Members are entitled to claim reimbursement of expenses for all meals and incidentals incurred while undertaking Council business. Reimbursement will be in accordance with ATO rules and guidelines, and the 0017.001.I.N Ordinary Elected Member Expenses Guideline.

The daily rates claimable are updated each year upon release by the Australian Taxation Office.

Meals and incidentals for family travelling with an Elected Member will not be reimbursed by City of Darwin.

Partner/spouse travel and/or attendance at events

Elected Members representing Council may be accompanied by a spouse or partner at events or while travelling as long as any additional costs are paid by the Elected Member and the RSVP is made to the event organisers.

City of Darwin will only pay for or reimburse the cost of an Elected Member's partner/spouse's attendance at an event if:

- a formal invitation includes the partner/spouse
- it is culturally required.

Hospitality costs

When approved to represent Council, Elected Members will be reimbursed for reasonable hospitality expenses deemed necessary.

Professional development

Professional development allowance may be claimed for activities including training courses or attendance at conferences/seminars/presentations.

Attendance at professional development must be pre-approved by the Chief Executive Officer using the appropriate forms.

Elected Members should share key learnings and insights gained during training courses and conferences with other Elected Members.

Under the Act, governance or other mandatory training may be required to be undertaken by Elected Members, within an agreed timeframe.

3.3 Provision of facilities

Elected member indemnity

Elected Members are provided certain protections from liability under the Act when acting in good faith and within the standards laid out in the Code of Conduct.

City of Darwin is unable to provide an indemnity for Elected Members appointed by Council to the position of Director of external boards of management, or an external board of directors. Elected Members are encouraged to ensure that these organisations have appropriate insurance in place for Directors prior to joining any board.

Vehicles

City of Darwin will offer the Lord Mayor a vehicle for personal and official use, as well as a fuel card, registration, and insurance.

Where the Lord Mayor is not receiving a Council-provided vehicle they can receive a monthly Vehicle Allowance, in line with the Remuneration Tribunal report.

The Lord Mayor may choose to salary package a motor vehicle under a novated lease arrangement via a City of Darwin-approved third party provider. No additional reimbursements are paid on salary packaged motor vehicles.

When attending events or functions in an official capacity representing Council, Elected Members have the option of:

- a private hire car
- reimbursement of taxi fare/s on provision of a tax invoice
- reimbursement of rideshare fare/s, including Uber, on provision of a tax invoice

- reimbursement of travel costs for use of their own vehicle, based on logbook evidence.

Elected Members may request a rental car for longer trips or where other transport is unavailable. Chief Executive Officer pre-approval is required, and requests should be lodged via the Councillor and Committees Support Officer together with the travel request.

ICT support and maintenance

ICT support and maintenance are available to Elected Members for equipment supplied by City of Darwin only. Home internet access is not provided by City of Darwin and Elected Members will not be provided with an allowance or reimbursement for ICT support or maintenance.

ICT officers and the Councillor and Committees Support Officer will provide support to Elected Members to ensure access to City of Darwin’s network.

Elected Members will not be provided with an allowance or able to claim reimbursement for ICT Support and maintenance of equipment not supplied by Council as the equipment is not deemed to be a Council asset.

Elected Members will be provided with a dedicated email address, with unlimited storage, for the purpose of performing official duties.

Elected Members must adhere to relevant legislation and City of Darwin’s policies and procedures when using this email address.

ICT hardware - computers and equipment

Elected Members may be provided with a laptop and IT equipment to allow them to perform their official duties. This equipment will be provided for the term of office and must be returned to City of Darwin at the end of their term or if they resign.

Where a laptop is not supplied, Elected Members may claim reimbursement for the cost of purchasing a laptop and computer equipment in accordance with 017.001.I.N Ordinary Elected Member Expenses Guideline

Meeting space

City of Darwin will provide a meeting space for the exclusive use of Elected Members to undertake Council business.

The Councillor meeting space is located in the current Civic Centre, adjacent to the Council Chambers.

Version:	Decision Number:	Adoption Date:	Next Review Date:
4	ORD215/24	11 June 2024	11 June 2028

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Electronic version current. Uncontrolled copy valid only at time of printing.

4 Definitions

Elected Members are the Lord 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.

5 Legislative references

Local Government Act 2019 (NT)

6 Procedures / related documents

0094.100.E.R Elected Members Breach of Code of Conduct

0015.100.E.R Elected Members Protocols and Interactions

0017.001.I.N Ordinary Elected Member Expenses Guideline

0017.002.I.N Deputy Lord Mayor Expenses Guideline

7 Responsibility / application

All Elected Members are responsible for ensuring they understand and adhere to this policy.

The Chief Executive Officer or delegated authority is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented.

This policy will be reviewed every four years, or as required.