



# Councillor Support and Expenses Policy

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### 1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to:

- 1.1.1 Provide guidance for the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses and provision of resources and facilities to support Councillors and members of Delegated Committees to effectively perform their role;
- 1.1.2 Demonstrate accountability to the community and uphold principles of public transparency; and
- 1.1.3 Meet the requirements of section 41 of the Act.



### 2. SCOPE

2.1 This policy applies to:

- 2.1.1 Golden Plains Shire Council Councillors; and
- 2.1.2 Members of Golden Plains Shire Council delegated committees.

### 3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 This policy is made in accordance with sections 40 – 43 of the Act.

3.2 In accordance with this policy and section 40 of the Act, Councillors and members of delegated committees will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses which:

- 3.2.1 Are bona fide expenses;
- 3.2.2 Have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or delegated committee member; and
- 3.2.3 Are reasonably necessary for the Councillor or delegated committee member to perform their role.

3.3 In accordance with this policy and section 42 of the Act, Council will make available facilities, support and resources to Councillors and members of delegated committees that are reasonably necessary to enable them to effectively perform their duties as an elected representative of the community.

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

- 3.4.1 Attendance at meetings of Council and its committees;
- 3.4.2 Attendance at briefing sessions, workshops, civic events or functions convened by Council;
- 3.4.3 Attendance at conferences, workshops and training programs related to the role of delegated committee member, Councillor, Mayor or Deputy Mayor;

- 3.4.4 Attendance at meetings, events or functions as the official representative of Council;
- 3.4.5 Site inspections, meetings and other duties in relation to identified community members concerning Council business.

### 3.5 Principles

- 3.5.1 The Council commits to the following principles:
  - a. Proper conduct: In accordance with section 123 of the Act, Councillors or members of delegated committee will not use public funds or resources in a manner that is improper or unauthorised.
  - b. Participation and access: This policy is intended to support people from diverse backgrounds, underrepresented groups, those in carer roles and those with special needs to serve as a Councillor or member of a delegated committee.
  - c. Equity: There must be equitable access to expenses and facilities for all Councillors or members of delegated committees.
  - d. Appropriateness and reasonableness: This policy provides clear direction on the appropriate use of Council resources in accordance with legal requirements and community expectations, while ensuring that Councillors and members of delegated committees are reimbursed adequately for expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their role as a Councillor or committee member.
  - e. Accountability and transparency: Pursuant to section 58 of the Act, payment of allowances, reimbursement of expenses and the provision of resources and facilities for Councillors and members of delegated committees must be accountable and transparent to the community.

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## 4. RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

- 4.1 Any equipment or resources provided remain the property of Council and must be returned within 30 days of the expiration of a Councillor or member of a delegated committee's term in office, retirement or resignation. This includes all confidential material obtained in a person's capacity as Councillor or delegated committee member, whether in electronic or hardcopy form.

### 4.2 Communication Equipment

- 4.2.1 The following equipment will be provided to each Councillor for the purposes of conducting Council related business only. The brand and specifications of equipment provided to Councillors will be determined by the Director Corporate Services, with consideration to the requirements of the ICT Department.
  - a. One laptop/notepad computer;
  - b. One mobile phone;
  - c. One wireless headset;
  - d. Internet connection with data allowance up to 1GB per month, in the form of a SIM card for use with mobile phone and/or computer and
  - e. Relevant computer software and peripherals (such as charger, docking station, keyboard and mouse).

4.2.2 Council will arrange for the installation of the equipment and provide the necessary maintenance and consumable products required for its operation.

4.2.3 The ICT Department will maintain a register of all equipment provided to Councillors for Council business.

### 4.3 **Communication Costs**

4.3.1 Council will bear all operating costs of Council-supplied equipment incurred in Australia. Council will not be responsible for calls/transmissions made outside Australia unless a prior arrangement has been made with the Chief Executive Officer.

4.3.2 Personal calls/texts and data usage should be minimised and where significant personal use has occurred, costs must be reimbursed to Council.

### 4.4 **Stationery**

4.4.1 Council will provide stationery facilities to each Councillor. These facilities are provided for use by the Councillor in the conduct of their duties of office.

4.4.2 Each Councillor will have access to an adequate supply of the following:

- a. Business cards
- b. Name badge
- c. Diary, planner or time manager

4.4.3 Upon request a lockable four-drawer filing cabinet will be available from Council to establish a home office. The Mayor or any Councillor wishing to purchase additional furniture or equipment shall do so at their own cost.

4.4.4 Councillors and members of delegated committees must exercise care to ensure that correspondence using Council stationery does not commit Council funds, convey a position which is contrary to that adopted by Council, or is otherwise contrary to Council policy. Letterhead incorporating the Council logo must not be used for personal correspondence.

4.4.5 Council letterhead must not be used in relation to a Council Election and Councillors must comply with all caretaker provisions that apply in the lead up to an election.

### 4.5 **Meeting rooms and facilities**

4.5.1 Subject to availability, meeting rooms at the Council office facilities at Bannockburn and the Well at Smythesdale, as well as other venues owned and controlled by Council, can be booked and used by Councillors and members of delegated committees for meetings, or for use as an occasional working space, where available during office hours.

4.5.2 Use of Council facilities in accordance with this part must be related to the person's role as a Councillor or delegated committee member and the host Councillor or delegated committee member must be in attendance at the meeting or function.

4.5.3 Subject to availability, ICT equipment can be provided for meetings upon request.

4.5.4 Upon request, limited catering (being tea, coffee and biscuits) can be provided for meetings.

4.5.5 Any bookings or use of facilities in accordance with this part must be coordinated through the Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer.

**4.6 Resources and facilities for the Mayor**

- 4.6.1 The Mayor will be provided with an office located within the main Bannockburn Council offices suitably equipped with office furniture, including a desk, small meeting table and chairs. Reasonable requests for additional furniture or equipment will be considered.
- 4.6.2 Council will provide at its cost to the Mayor a fully registered, insured, maintained and fueled vehicle for use by the Mayor on official duties and for limited private use. The Mayor may choose to use their personal vehicle, in which case travelling expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with clause 6.4. The Mayor must comply with the Motor Vehicle Procedure to the extent relevant at all times.
- 4.6.3 Council will provide to the Mayor a corporate credit card with a credit limit of \$1,000 for use while discharging the duties of the office of the Mayor. Use of the corporate card is to be in accordance with Council's Procurement Card Use Procedure. The corporate card statement is to be reconciled with tax invoices and authorised by the Chief Executive Officer.
- 4.6.4 A Mayoral Gift will be provided to the Mayor at the conclusion of their term, as a token of appreciation from the Council on behalf of the community. Expenditure on the Mayoral Gift will not exceed \$100 per year for each 12-month Mayoral term served.

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**5. SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE**

**5.1 Childcare Costs and Carer Expenses**

- 5.1.1 Council will either meet or reimburse the out of pocket costs of care where:
  - a. A Councillor or member of a delegated committee has child care responsibilities for a child up to 16 years of age; or
  - b. A Councillor or member of a delegated committee is in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the Carers Recognition Act 2012;

And the Councillor or delegated committee member incurs costs of care due to attendance at Council meetings, civic functions, committee meetings, functions or formal briefings, or when representing Council on Council business as an official delegate or representative.
- 5.1.2 Payments cannot be claimed where the care provider is a family member of the Councillor or delegated committee member or normally lives at the same residence as the Councillor, except where a live-in (professional) helper such as a nanny is required to work extra time at additional expense because of the duties of the Councillor or delegated committee member.

**5.2 Administrative Assistance**

- 5.2.1 Reasonable administrative/secretarial assistance will be provided to assist the Mayor to undertake the role effectively. The level of support will be determined by the Chief Executive Officer in conjunction with the Mayor.
- 5.2.2 Subject to availability, limited administrative/secretarial assistance may be provided to Councillors for work directly related to the duties of their roles. All such work must be coordinated through the Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer and approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

**5.3 Mail Services**

- 5.3.1 All mail received by Council is deemed to be Council business and will be opened and processed by Council's Information Management staff. Personal mail should not be directed to any Council address.
- 5.3.2 Each Councillor may leave up to 20 standard mail items per financial year related to Council business for postage through the Australia Post system. Any additional postage requires the approval of the Mayor.
- 5.3.3 Mail must be contained within Golden Plains Shire Council envelopes and must be coordinated through the Executive Assistant – Chief Executive Officer.

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**6. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, EVENTS AND TRAVEL****6.1 Representing Council at Functions, Events or Meetings**

- 6.1.1 A Councillor or delegated committee member attending an event, function or meeting as an official representative of Council is entitled to have all reasonable expenses for travelling/transport, accommodation, registration fees or tickets, meals, and other necessary associated out of pocket expenses reimbursed or paid on their behalf.
- 6.1.2 The spouses/partners of Councillors or delegated committee members may attend civic functions and events where it is considered necessary or appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer.

**6.2 Conferences, Seminars, Training Programs, Professional Development and Events**

- 6.2.1 Participation in professional development by Councillors or delegated committee members is strongly encouraged. Council will meet or reimburse the costs of professional development undertaken by Councillors or delegated committee members in accordance with this clause 6.2.
- 6.2.2 Requests to attend any training, professional development, conferences, seminars or events (collectively 'professional development programs') must be made to the CEO on the approved form.
- 6.2.3 Approval of attendance at professional development programs will be based on the following criteria and considerations:
  - a. Participation in the professional development program is in the interests of the Golden Plains Shire community;
  - b. Participation in the professional development program provides a demonstrable public benefit, as distinguished from private benefit;
  - c. The content of the professional development program is directly relevant to the delegated committee member or Councillor's role; and
  - d. The professional development program takes place and the knowledge or benefit is able to be utilised during the delegated committee member or Councillor's term of office.
- 6.2.4 Where a Councillor or delegated committee member seeks to attend a professional development program hosted or delivered by a non-industry peak body, they must provide justification for their attendance with reference to the criteria described at 6.2.3. Attendance by Councillors or members of delegated committees at non-industry peak body programs will



be approved by the Mayor (or the Deputy Mayor where the attending Councillor is the Mayor) in consultation with the CEO.

6.2.5 Attendance at any professional development programs where the total cost exceeds \$3,000 per Councillor must be approved by Council resolution.

6.2.6 Attendance at any professional development programs at a total cost to Council of \$3,000 or less may be approved by the Chief Executive Officer up to a maximum expenditure per financial year of:

- a. For each member of a delegated committee, an equal share of the amount specifically budgeted for professional development for delegated committees;
- b. \$3,000 per Councillor, other than the Mayor; or
- c. \$5,000 for the Mayor;

Unless Council resolves to fund the additional amount.

6.2.7 In addition and as exceptions to the expenditure limits described in the above clauses 6.2.5 and 6.2.6, subject to approval of the Chief Executive Officer:

- a. The Mayor may attend the Annual National General Assembly of the Australian Local Government Association. Where the Mayor is not available or otherwise cannot attend this conference, the Deputy Mayor may attend in their place. If both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor cannot attend, a Council resolution will be required to appoint another Councillor as the official representative; and
- b. Any or all Councillors may attend the Municipal Association of Victoria ('MAV') Councillor Development Weekend.

6.2.8 In the event that Council pays upfront the costs for a professional development program for a Councillor or member of a delegated committee and the Councillor or delegated committee member does not attend or does not complete the unit or course of study, the Councillor or delegated committee member may be required to reimburse Council for any costs incurred.

6.2.9 Where travel, accommodation and meal expenses are incurred in conjunction with attendance at a professional development program, the relevant provisions relating to those expenses in this policy will apply.

6.2.10 After the conclusion of the professional development program, a summary of actual expenditure incurred must be provided to the Chief Executive Officer through the Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer.

6.2.11 On conclusion of the professional development program that is approved by resolution of Council, the attending Councillor or member of a delegated committee must provide a report on the event to the next convenient Council meeting.

### 6.3 **Meals and Refreshments**

6.3.1 Where Council meetings or briefings are held at times which extend through normal meal times, Councillors will be provided with suitable meals served on the premises.

6.3.2 Where a Council briefing runs over the scheduled end time and through or within one hour of a normal meal time, if no meal has been arranged on the premises, Councillors are entitled to claim reimbursement for an overtime



meal allowance at the Australian Taxation Office overtime meal allowance rate applicable.

- 6.3.3 Councillors not requiring a meal or with specific dietary requirements are to advise accordingly to enable arrangements to be made.
- 6.3.4 The meal arrangements for each meeting will be at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer, however should be in the form of a single course meal served with tea, coffee and non-alcoholic beverages. Light refreshments may also be provided.
- 6.3.5 Where a formally invited external guest is in attendance at a Council dinner, additional courses may be arranged.
- 6.3.6 No Council funds will be used to purchase alcohol for consumption by Councillors.
- 6.3.7 Council will meet the cost or reimburse reasonable meal expenses incurred by Councillors or members of delegated committees representing Council or attending professional development programs, in accordance with clauses 6.1 and 6.2. Additional meal costs incurred by partners and/or children accompanying Councillors or members of delegated committees will be borne by the Councillor or delegated committee member.
- 6.3.8 Where relevant, Council will meet the cost of the main conference dinner or similar for Councillors or members of delegated committees attending professional development programs in accordance with clause 6.2 and if not included in registration fees.

#### 6.4 **Private vehicle expenses**

- 6.4.1 Councillors or members of delegated committees using their private vehicles on eligible Council business may claim expense reimbursement, including reasonable parking costs, where such travel is in the course of conducting Council business.
- 6.4.2 The following is eligible Council business for the purposes of private vehicle travel reimbursement:
  - a. Attendance at scheduled and unscheduled Council meetings;
  - b. Attendance at Councillor Briefing sessions;
  - c. Attendance at Council Committee meetings, as a member of a delegated committee or where the Councillor has been appointed as the Council representative or has been requested by the Council representative to attend on their behalf;
  - d. Attendance at meetings (including committee or sub-committee meetings) of State or Regional organisations, where the Councillor or member of a delegated committee has been appointed as the Council representative or has been requested by the Council representative to attend on their behalf;
  - e. Attendance at professional development programs approved in accordance with clause 6.2;
  - f. Attendance as the official Council representative at Council functions or functions where the Councillor or member of a delegated committee is invited by an organisation and where there is a direct involvement of Council;
  - g. Inspection of matters raised by identified members of the community,

which are considered reasonable and necessary and where travel is within the Shire.

- 6.4.3 Where the activity is attended by a Councillor or member of a delegated committee on a voluntary basis or where there is no resolution or policy of Council in support of attendance, then the activity will not be deemed to be performing the duties of a Councillor or member of a delegated committee and associated costs should be met by the Councillor or delegated committee member.
- 6.4.4 Travel must be undertaken as efficiently as possible and will be measured from and to the Councillor or member of a delegated committee's nominated Golden Plains Shire residential property.
- 6.4.5 Claims for reimbursement must be made in writing in the approved form. Beginning and ending odometer readings must be provided for all trips for which reimbursement is being claimed under this clause 6.4. Where a claim is made for private vehicle expenses in relation to clause 6.4.2(g), proof of the matter being raised by an identified community member must be provided (for example, by email or other correspondence to the Councillor).
- 6.4.6 Reimbursement of travel using private vehicles will be made at the Australian Taxation Office vehicle flat rate as at 1 July for the financial year in which the claimed travel was undertaken.
- 6.4.7 Where practicable and by prior arrangement with the Chief Executive Officer, a Council pool vehicle may be made available to Councillors or members of delegated committees for travel where use of private vehicles or other means of transport is not convenient. No private use of Council vehicles other than the Mayor's vehicle is allowable. Use of Council pool vehicles must be in accordance with the Motor Vehicle Procedure.
- 6.4.8 Claims for reimbursement will only be paid on the basis of the actual form of transport used and costs incurred.
- 6.4.9 Council supports the transport needs of people with a disability and/or those requiring specialised transport. Council will provide reimbursement for travel and transport where a Councillor or member of a delegated committee requires modified vehicles to transport wheelchairs and/or other support aides.
- 6.4.10 Any expenses from infringements, such as breach of road, traffic, parking or other regulations or laws, will not be reimbursed by Council. Where infringements are incurred by a Councillor or member of a delegated committee while driving a Council pool vehicle, the cost of the infringement must be paid by the Councillor or delegated committee member.

### 6.5 **Travel and accommodation expenses**

- 6.5.1 Where necessary due to travel distance and the starting time of the event or professional development program, appropriate accommodation selected by the Chief Executive Officer will be available for the attending Councillor or member of a delegated committee from the day prior to the day of commencement and each day on which official sessions of the event or professional development program are held. Accommodation will be a standard room in a 3 star hotel. If no 3 star accommodation is available, 4 star accommodation may be provided.
- 6.5.2 Where necessary, the Chief Executive Officer will arrange and meet the costs of transport arrangements for a Councillor to, from and during events

or professional development programs, to the following standards:

- a. Aircraft – economy class airfare;
- b. Hire car – standard 4 cylinder;
- c. Private/Council vehicle – including vehicle parking costs;
- d. Taxi; or
- e. Train/Bus – economy or standard fare.

- 6.5.3 If two or more Councillors or members of a delegated committee are travelling to the same event or professional development program, travel should be shared, for example by carpooling, as much as practicable.
- 6.5.4 Where a Councillor or member of a delegated committee wishes to upgrade their travel, such as by flying in a higher class, staying in a higher standard of accommodation or hiring a higher class of vehicle, they are able to do so, subject to meeting the additional cost to Council of any upgrades.
- 6.5.5 Councillors or members of a delegated committee may request that their itinerary for Council travel be extended for personal reasons. If an extension in dates results in a higher fare, Councillors or members of a delegated committee must reimburse Council for the difference. If an extension in dates results in a lower fare, no payment to the Councillor or member of a delegated committee shall be made.
- 6.5.6 Any additional costs arising from a partner, spouse or companion accompanying a Councillor or member of a delegated committee on a Council business trip must be met by the Councillor or delegated committee member, unless there is a bona fide and pre-approved business purpose to support their attendance.

## **7. OTHER ENTITLEMENTS**

### **7.1 Insurance**

- 7.1.1 Councillors and members of delegated committees are covered by Council's insurance policies, in respect of any act or thing necessarily or reasonably done or omitted to be done in good faith, in the performance of, or the reasonable belief that the act or omission is in the performance of, a duty, function or exercise of a power under the Local Government Act 2020.
- 7.1.2 Council will pay the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim made against a Councillor or member of a delegated committee arising from Council business where any claim is accepted by Council's insurers, whether defended or not.
- 7.1.3 Council equipment provided to Councillors or members of delegated committees to assist in performing their role, is covered for damage or theft under Council's insurance policies. Councillors and members of delegated committees are expected to exercise due care in protecting the equipment from damage or theft.

### **7.2 Legal Expenses**

- 7.2.1 Other than by specific Council resolution or in accordance with a Council policy, any legal expenses incurred by a Councillor or member of a delegated committee shall be the responsibility of that Councillor or

delegated committee member.

### 7.3 Other Expenses

- 7.3.1 Councillors or members of delegated committees may require reimbursement of other expenses not specifically dealt with in this policy which are incurred while performing their duties.
- 7.3.2 All claims for reimbursement of other expenses are to be made on the approved form and contain the name of the claimant, details of the nature of the claim and a signed certification that the expenses incurred meet the requirements of clause 3.2.
- 7.3.3 Any claims for expenses not covered by this policy must firstly be referred to the Chief Executive Officer before being submitted.
- 7.3.4 Where other expenses are claimed, they will be approved by:
  - a. In the case of expenses claimed by a Councillor or member of a delegated committee – the Mayor.
  - b. In the case of expenses claimed by the Mayor or a member of a delegated committee – the CEO.

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## 8. PAYMENT AND REPORTING

### 8.1 Payment of Allowances and Expenses

- 8.1.1 In accordance with section 39 of the Act, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors are entitled to receive an allowance while performing their duties as elected representatives. Allowances are determined by and may be adjusted by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal.
- 8.1.2 In accordance with section 39(5) of the Act, a Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor who elects to receive less than or none of the allowance to which they are entitled must inform the CEO in writing of their decision, to enable payments to be adjusted. Where no such notification is provided, the full entitlement will be paid.
- 8.1.3 Any personal taxation arrangements or implications from the receipt of allowances or expenses are the responsibility of individual Councillors or members of delegated committees.
- 8.1.4 Allowances will be paid monthly.
- 8.1.5 Upon a Councillor or member of a delegated committee ceasing to hold office, any moneys paid in advance must be refunded within 14 days of the end of the quarter. Where this would cause financial hardship to the Councillor, a payment plan may be arranged by agreement with the CEO.
- 8.1.6 The Mayor or any Councillor having completed a full term of office shall not be entitled to any pro rata adjustment of allowance to take into account any days less than or exceeding one year.
- 8.1.7 Payment will be made by electronic funds transfer, in a manner authorised in writing by the Councillor or the delegated committee member.
- 8.1.8 A remote travel allowance provides compensation for the time spent travelling long distances by Councillors in remote areas. This allowance is only available to Councillors who normally reside more than 50 kilometres (one way) by the shortest possible practicable road distance from the

location or locations specified for the conduct of scheduled, unscheduled or committee meetings of the Council, or any municipal or community functions which have been authorised by Council resolution for the Councillor to attend. As of 8 December 2022, the remote travel allowance was set at \$45 for each day on which one or more meetings or authorised functions were attended by the Council member, up to a maximum limit per annum for each Councillor of \$5,625. This amount is determined by and may be adjusted by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal.

## 8.2 Recoupment of Private Expenses

8.2.1 Incidental private use of Council resources and facilities may occur from time to time however this should be kept to a minimum. Councillors and members of delegated committees must reimburse the direct costs of any significant private use of home/workplace facilities to Council.

8.2.2 The direct costs of private use of home/workplace facilities provided by Council may be repaid to Council via two methods:

- a. Direct payment to Council on completion of the approved form; or
- b. Deduction from the Councillor allowance on completion of the approved form.

## 8.3 Claiming Expenses

8.3.1 Claims are to be lodged with the Executive Assistant – Chief Executive Officer.

8.3.2 Where a Councillor or member of a delegated committee has received payment or expenses have been paid or reimbursed by another organisation or body, they will not be entitled to claim reimbursement from Council.

8.3.3 Except at the end of the financial year (being 30 June), claims must be submitted within one month of the end of the quarter in which the expense was incurred or the travel or professional development program was completed. Following the end of the financial year, all claims must be submitted within 14 days.

8.3.4 Where claims are submitted outside of the timeframe described in clause 8.3.3, a written explanation for the delay in submitting the claim must be provided to the Mayor for consideration or in the case of claims for reimbursement made by the Mayor, to the CEO. Claims for expenses six months or older will not be reimbursed.

8.3.5 All expenses need to be accompanied by an expense claim form and proof of expenditure, including tax invoices. Original tax invoices must be attached for all purchases. Credit card receipts will not be accepted.

8.3.6 Where claims are being submitted for reimbursement for expenses incurred under clause 6.4.2(g), verification of the community member/s requesting that a Councillor inspect the matter must be provided. This may be in the form of an email, calendar appointment or name and location of the matter. In circumstances where the community member/s has requested to remain anonymous, the CEO may accept a claim without verification of the request being raised or with agreed alternative verification.

8.3.7 Unless otherwise specified, claims for reimbursement will be authorised by the Chief Executive Officer.

8.3.8 Expenses incurred from the purchase and consumption of any alcoholic

product will not be paid. Any reimbursement for claims containing expenses for alcoholic products will be reduced by the amount incurred on alcoholic product.

### 8.4 Reimbursement of Expenses

- 8.4.1 Reimbursements will be paid by electronic funds transfer (EFT) within 14 days of approval of the claim.
- 8.4.2 Reimbursement of Councillors' out-of-pocket expenses will only apply to costs that have been incurred in the performance of normal Council duties, and not for expenses that support or are connected with a candidate's election campaigning.

### 8.5 Dispute of decision

- 8.5.1 A Councillor or member of a delegated committee is entitled to dispute a decision regarding a reimbursement claim. Any dispute must be submitted in writing to the CEO and must relate to a claim made by the Councillor or delegated committee member submitting the dispute.
- 8.5.2 In the event of a disputed claim reimbursement decision, the CEO in consultation with the Director Corporate Services will advise the Mayor (or in the case of a dispute submitted by the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor) of the reasons for the decision. The Mayor (or in the case of a dispute submitted by the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor) will provide the reasons for decision to the Councillor or delegated committee member disputing the decision.
- 8.5.3 If the matter remains unresolved, it will be reported to Council for determination. Council's decision on the matter will be final.

### 8.6 Audit and Reporting

- 8.6.1 Councillor and delegated committee member expenses are to be reported to Council on a quarterly basis.
- 8.6.2 The expense claim form for all approved claims will be provided to all Councillors and members of delegated committees as an attachment to the quarterly report.
- 8.6.3 All payments made to Councillors or members of delegated committees during their elected term and falling within the terms of this policy shall be publicly disclosed on Council's website.
- 8.6.4 Councillor and members of delegated committee expenses are subject to audit by the Victorian Auditor General, the Victorian Local Government Inspectorate and Council's internal auditors and reported to the Chief Executive Officer.
- 8.6.5 Any items considered to be in breach of the Local Government Act 2020 or this policy will be reported to the Audit and Risk Committee.

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## 9. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 9.1 Allowance payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Determination No. 1/2022 and any updates or indexations made by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal
- 9.2 Recognition and Support: The Victorian Government's Policy Statement on Local Government Mayoral and Councillor Allowances and Resources, April 2008



## 10. RESPONSIBILITIES

### 10.1 Compliance, monitoring and review:

10.1.1 The policy owner is responsible for ensuring the policy:

- a. aligns with relevant legislation, government policy and Council's requirements/strategies/values;
- b. is implemented and monitored (i.e. the policy is followed, reflects the changing policy environment, and emerging issues are identified); and
- c. is reviewed to evaluate its continuing effectiveness (e.g. achieving its purpose, remains relevant/current).

### 10.2 Reporting:

10.2.1 Quarterly reports of all councillor and delegated committee member expenses will be provided to council, and the council's Audit and Risk Committee.

10.2.2 The report will include:

- a. expenses incurred by councillors or members of delegated committees during the quarter; and
- b. reimbursement claims (regardless of whether the claim is approved or denied) made by Councillors or members of delegated committees during the quarter.

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

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

### 10.3 Records Management:

10.3.1 Council must maintain all records relevant to administering this policy in accordance with the Public Records Act 1973.

## 11. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS OR ABBREVIATIONS USED

Term	Definition
Act	Means the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)
Carer	A carer is defined under section 4 of the Carers Recognition Act 2012
Council	Golden Plains Shire Council
Councillors	Means the individuals holding the office of a member of Golden Plains Shire Council.
Members of Delegated Committees; or Delegated Committee Members	Means the individuals appointed by the Council to a delegated committee, as defined under the Act.



Council Resources	Includes offices, vehicles, staff, hospitality, services, property, equipment (phones, computers etc.) and stationery
Expenses	Costs incurred by the Mayor, Councillors or members of a Delegated Committee in performing their official duties
Non-industry peak body	Means any body other than the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Australian Local Government Association (ALGA);</li> <li>- Australian Local Government Womens' Association (ALGWA);</li> <li>- Victorian State Government or related agencies/authorities (e.g. Victorian Ombudsman);</li> <li>- Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV);</li> <li>- Victorian Local Governance Association.</li> </ul>

## 12. RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

### Council Policies

- 12.1 Governance Rules
- 12.2 Motor Vehicle Procedure
- 12.3 Procurement Card Use Procedure
- 12.4 Public Transparency Policy
- 12.5 Information Privacy Policy

### Legislation

- 12.6 Carers Recognition Act 2012
- 12.7 Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- 12.8 Freedom of Information Act 1982
- 12.9 Local Government Act 2020
- 12.10 Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- 12.11 Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- 12.12 Gender Equity Bill 2020

## 13. HUMAN RIGHTS STATEMENT OF COMPATABILITY

- 13.1 It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic).

## 14. POLICY OWNER

- 14.1 The Coordinator Governance and Risk is the policy owner.
- 14.2 The policy owner is the individual who is given the responsibility to review, edit and

maintain this policy and associated procedure. The policy owner is also the point of contact for any questions regarding this policy.

## 15. FEEDBACK

- 15.1 You may provide feedback about this document by emailing [enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au)

## 16. DOCUMENT INFORMATION

DOCUMENT TYPE:	Council Policy document
DOCUMENT STATUS:	
DOCUMENT OWNER POSITION:	Coordinator Governance and Risk
APPROVED BY:	Council
DATE ADOPTED:	[Date of resolution]
VERSION NUMBER:	6
REVIEW DATE:	[Date of resolution + 4 years]
DATE RESCINDED:	N/A
EVIDENCE OF APPROVAL:	<p>_____</p> <p>Signed by Chief Executive Officer</p>
FILE LOCATION:	INT23/7553A0F8
NOTES:	<p>Policy documents are amended from time to time, therefore you should not rely on a printed copy being the current version. Please consult Council's Policy page on the Golden Plains Shire Council website to ensure that the version you are using is up to date.</p> <p>Available at:</p> <p><a href="https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/residents/my-council/about-council/council-policies">https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/residents/my-council/about-council/council-policies</a></p>