

MURRAY RIVER COUNCIL
COUNCIL POLICY

DRAFT
**COUNCILLOR
EXPENSES
AND
FACILITIES
POLICY**

POL-103.V#4



murray river
council

1. INTRODUCTION

This Policy enables the reasonable and appropriate reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities to Councillors to help them undertake their civic duties.

It ensures accountability and transparency and seeks to align Councillor expenses and facilities with community expectations. Councillors must not obtain private or political benefit from any expense or facility provided under this Policy.

The Policy has been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 (the 'Act') and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (the 'Regulation') and complies with the Office of Local Government's Guidelines for the payment of expenses and provision of facilities to Mayors and Councillors in NSW.

The Policy sets out the maximum amounts Murray River Council (the 'Council') will pay for specific expenses and facilities. Expenses not explicitly addressed in this Policy will not be paid or reimbursed.

The main expenses and facilities are summarized in the table below. All monetary amounts are exclusive of GST.

Expenses	Maximum amount	Frequency
General travel expenses	\$10,000 per Councillor, additional allowance of \$2,500 for the Mayor	Per year
Interstate, overseas and long distance intrastate travel expenses (incl. airfares)	\$25,000 total for all Councillors	Per year
Accommodation and meals	As per the <u>NSW Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009 – Items 1,2 & 3</u> adjusted annually	Per meal/night
Professional development	\$5,000 per Councillor	Per year
Conferences and seminars	\$20,000 total for all Councillors	Per year
ICT expenses	\$3,000 per Councillor	Per term
Carer expenses	\$1,000 per Councillor	Per year
Home office expenses	\$500 per Councillor	Per year
Council vehicle and fuel card	Provided to the Mayor	Per term
Furnished office	Provided to the Mayor	Ongoing
Uniform/Clothing allowance	\$200 per returning Councillor \$600 per newly elected Councillors for the first year of Office. (Initial issue no charge max. \$600)	Per year
Facility	Maximum amount	Frequency
Access to a meeting room	Provided to all Councillors	As required
Council vehicle and fuel card	Provided to the Mayor	Ongoing
Corporate Credit Card	Provided to the Mayor	Ongoing
Furnished office	Provided to the Mayor	Ongoing
Administrative support	Provided to all Councillors	As required

2. PURPOSE

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- (a) enable the reasonable and appropriate reimbursement of expenses incurred by Councillors while undertaking their civic duties;
- (b) enable facilities of a reasonable and appropriate standard to be provided to Councillors to support them in undertaking their civic duties;
- (c) ensure accountability and transparency in reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities to Councillors;
- (d) ensure facilities and expenses provided to Councillors meet community expectations;
- (e) support a diversity of representation; and
- (f) fulfil the Council's statutory responsibilities.

3. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Councillors of Murray River Council.

4. LEGISLATION

- ▶ Local Government Act 1993 - Sections 252, 253 and 382
- ▶ Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 - Clauses 217 and 403

5. POLICY STATEMENT

The provision of expenses and facilities enables Councillors to fulfil their civic duties as the elected representative of the Council.

The community is entitled to know the extent of expenses paid to Councillors, as well as the facilities provided.

The purpose of this Policy is to clearly state the facilities and support that are available to Councillors to assist them in fulfilling their civic duties.

Council employees are empowered to question or refuse a request for payment from a Councillor when it is not in accord with this Policy.

Expenses and facilities provided by this Policy are in addition to fees paid to Councillors. **Councillor's fees are adopted annually by resolution of Council, they are determined by applying the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal - Annual Report and Determination and in accordance with Section 241 of the Act.**

Additional costs incurred by a Councillor in excess of these limits are considered a personal expense that is the responsibility of the Councillor.

Councillors must provide claims for reimbursement, including supporting documentation (eg receipts and/or tax invoice), within three (3) months of an expense being incurred. Claims made after this time cannot be approved.

Detailed reports on the provision of expenses and facilities to Councillors will be publicly tabled at a Council meeting every six (6) months and published in full on Council's website. These reports will include expenditure summarised by individual Councillor and as a total for all Councillors.

6. PRINCIPLES

Council commits to the following principles:

- ▶ **Proper conduct:**

Councillors and staff acting lawfully and honestly, exercising care and diligence in carrying out their functions.

► **Reasonable expenses:**

Providing for Councillors to be reimbursed for expenses reasonably incurred as part of their role as Councillor.

► **Participation and access:**

Enabling people from diverse backgrounds, underrepresented groups, those in carer roles and those with special needs to serve as a Councillor.

► **Equity:**

There must be equitable access to expenses and facilities for all Councillors.

► **Appropriate use of resources:**

Providing clear direction on the appropriate use of Council resources in accordance with legal requirements and community expectations.

► **Accountability and transparency:**

Clearly stating and reporting on the expenses and facilities provided to Councillors

7. PRIVATE AND POLITICAL BENEFIT

Councillors must not obtain private or political benefit from any expense or facility provided under this Policy, ie Council equipment or facilities cannot be used to provide a political benefit.

Private use of Council equipment and facilities by Councillors may occur from time to time. For example, telephoning home to advise that a Council meeting will run later than expected. Such incidental private use does not require a compensatory payment back to Council.

Councillors should avoid obtaining any greater private benefit from Council than an incidental benefit. Where there are unavoidable circumstances and more substantial private use of Council facilities does occur, Councillors must reimburse Council.

Campaigns for re-election are considered to be a political benefit. The following are examples of what is considered to be a political interest during a re-election campaign:

- production of election material;
- use of Council resources and equipment for campaigning;
- use of official Council letterhead, publications, websites or services for political benefit; and
- fundraising activities of political parties or individuals, including political fundraising events.

PART A: EXPENSES

All expenses provided under this Policy will be for a purpose specific to the functions of holding civic office. Allowances for general expenses are not permitted under this Policy.

Expenses not explicitly addressed in this Policy will not be paid or reimbursed.

8. SPECIFIC EXPENSES

8.1 General Travel Arrangements And Expenses

All travel by Councillors should be undertaken using the most direct route and the most practicable and economical mode of transport.

Each Councillor may be reimbursed up to a total of \$10,000 per year, and the Mayor may be reimbursed an additional amount of up to \$2,500 per year, for travel expenses incurred while undertaking official business, professional development or attending approved conferences and seminars within NSW.

This includes reimbursement:

- › for public transport fares;
- › for the use of a private vehicle or hire car;
- › for parking costs for Council and other meetings;
- › for tolls;
- › by Cabcharge card or equivalent; and
- › for documented ride-share programs, such as Uber, where tax invoices can be issued.

Allowances for the use of a private vehicle will be reimbursed by kilometre at the rate contained in the current Local Government (State) Award.

Councillors seeking to be reimbursed for use of a private vehicle must keep a log book recording the date, distance and purpose of travel being claimed. Copies of the relevant log book contents must be provided with the claim.

8.2 Interstate, Overseas and Long Distance Intrastate Travel Expenses

Given Council's location on an interstate border, travel to Victoria will be considered as general travel. Arrangements and expenses for this travel will be governed by Clause 8.1 above.

Council will scrutinise the value and need for Councillors to undertake overseas travel. Councils should avoid interstate, overseas and long-distance intrastate trips unless direct and tangible benefits can be established for the Council and the local community. This includes travel to sister and friendship cities.

Total interstate, overseas and long-distance intrastate travel expenses for all Councillors will be capped at a maximum of \$25,000 per year. This amount will be set aside in Council's annual budget.

Councillors seeking approval for any interstate and long-distance intrastate travel must submit a case to, and obtain the approval of, the Council and/or CEO prior to travel.

Councillors seeking approval for any overseas travel must submit a case to, and obtain the approval of, a full Council meeting prior to travel.

The case should include:

- › objectives to be achieved in travel, including an explanation of how the travel aligns with current Council priorities and business, the community benefits which will accrue as a result and its relevance to the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties;
- › who is to take part in the travel;
- › duration and itinerary of travel; and
- › a detailed budget including a statement of any amounts expected to be reimbursed by the participant/s.

For interstate and long-distance intrastate journeys by air ~~of less than three (3) hours~~, the class of air travel is to be economy.

~~For interstate journeys by air of more than three (3) hours, the class of air travel is to be economy.~~

If a Councillor wishes to upgrade the class of air travel, it will be at the Councillor's personal expense.

For international travel, the class of air travel is to be premium economy, if available. Otherwise, the class of travel is to be economy.

Bookings for approved air travel are to be made through the CEO's office.

For air travel that is reimbursed as Council business, Councillors will not accrue points from the airline's frequent flyer program. This is considered a private benefit.

8.3 Travel Expenses Not Paid By Council

Council will not pay any traffic or parking fines or administrative charges for road toll accounts.

8.4 Accommodation and Meals

In circumstances where it would introduce undue risk for a Councillor to travel to or from official business in the late evening or early morning, reimbursement of costs for accommodation and meals on the night before or after the meeting may be approved by the CEO. This includes where travel from home would involve travel before 7:00 am or travel to home would involve travel after 6:00 pm and the Councillor lives more than 50 kilometres from the meeting location.

Council will reimburse costs for accommodation and meals while Councillors are undertaking prior approved travel or professional development more than 200 kilometres outside the Murray River Council geographic area.

The daily limits for accommodation and meal expenses within Australia are to be consistent with those set out in Part B Monetary Rates of the NSW Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009 – Items 1,2 and 3, as adjusted annually.

The daily limits for accommodation and meal expenses outside Australia are to be determined in advance by the CEO and approved by the Council.

Councillors will not be reimbursed for alcoholic beverages.

8.5 Refreshments for Council Related Meetings

Appropriate refreshments will be available for Council meetings, Council committee meetings, Councillor briefings, approved meetings and engagements, and official Council functions, as approved by the CEO.

~~As an indicative guide for the standard of refreshments to be provided at Council related meetings, the CEO must be mindful of Part B Monetary Rates of the NSW Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009 – as adjusted annually.~~

8.6 Professional Development

Council will set aside \$5,000 per Councillor annually in its budget to facilitate professional development of Councillors through programs, training, education courses and membership of professional bodies.

In the first year of a new Council term, Council will provide a comprehensive induction program for all Councillors which considers any guidelines issued by the Office of Local Government (OLG). The cost of the induction program will be in addition to the ongoing professional development funding.

Annual membership of professional bodies will only be covered where the membership is relevant to the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties, the Councillor actively participates in the body and the cost of membership is likely to be fully offset by savings from attending events as a member.

Approval for professional development activities is subject to a prior written request to the CEO outlining the:

- details of the proposed professional development;
- relevance to Council priorities and business; and
- relevance of the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties.

In assessing a Councillor request for a professional development activity, the CEO must consider the factors set out above, as well as the cost of the professional development in relation to the Councillor's remaining budget.

8.7 Conferences and seminars

Council is committed to ensuring its Councillors are up to date with contemporary issues facing Council and the community and local government in NSW.

Council will set aside a total amount of \$20,000 annually in its budget to facilitate Councillor attendance at conferences and seminars, including the Local Government NSW Annual Conference. This allocation is for all Councillors. The CEO will ensure that access to expenses relating to conferences and seminars is distributed equitably.

Approval to attend a conference or seminar is subject to a written request to the CEO. In assessing a Councillor request, the CEO must consider factors including the:

- relevance of the topics and presenters to current Council priorities or business and the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties; and
- cost of the conference or seminar in relation to the total remaining budget.

Council will meet the reasonable cost of registration fees, transportation and accommodation associated with attendance at conferences approved by the CEO. Council will also meet the reasonable cost of meals when they are not included in the conference fees. Reimbursement for accommodation and meals not included in the conference fees will be subject to Clause 8.4.

~~8.8 Local Government NSW Annual Conference~~

~~Up to four (4) Councillors will also attend the Local Government NSW Annual Conference each year. Council will reimburse the cost of registration fees, and where the conference is outside the Murray River Council region, the cost of travel, accommodation and meals not covered by the conference registration, subject to Clause 8.4~~

~~For the Local Government NSW Annual Conference only, Council will meet the costs of the official conference dinner for an accompanying person of a Councillor.~~

8.8 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Expenses

Council will provide Councillors with appropriate ICT devices ~~and services~~ up to a limit of \$3,000 for each Councillor per term. ~~This may include tablets, tablet services and data.~~

Council will provide the Mayor with a mobile telephone device and the Mayor will meet the costs of any personal calls or data use on the mobile phone. Each billing period the Mayor will identify personal calls and data use and will meet the costs of same.

Reimbursement will be made only for communications devices and services (including data) used for Councillors to undertake their civic duties, such as:

- receiving and reading Council business papers;
- correspondence; and
- diary and appointment management.

~~The reimbursement of data costs for Councillors (excluding the Mayor who has data access provided through the mobile phone) will be made at the lesser value of - 15% of the Councillors personal data plan or \$15 per month.~~

Councillors may seek reimbursement for applications on their mobile electronic communication device that are directly related to their duties as a Councillor, within the maximum limit.

8.9 Special requirement and carer expenses

Council encourages wide participation and interest in civic office. It will seek to ensure Council premises and associated facilities are accessible, including provision for sight and hearing-impaired Councillors and those with other disabilities.

Transportation provisions outlined in this Policy will also assist Councillors who may be unable to drive a vehicle.

In addition, to the provisions above, the CEO may authorise the provision of reasonable additional facilities and expenses in order to allow a Councillor with a disability to perform their civic duties.

Councillors who are the principal carer of a child or other elderly, disabled and/or sick immediate family member will be entitled to reimbursement of carer's expenses up to a maximum of \$1,000 per annum for attendance at official business.

Childcare expenses may be claimed for children up to and including the age of 16 years where the carer is not a relative.

In the event of caring for an adult person, Councillors will need to provide suitable evidence to the CEO that reimbursement is applicable. This may take the form of advice from a medical practitioner.

8.10 Home office expenses

Each Councillor may be reimbursed up to \$500 per year for costs associated with the maintenance of a home office, such as minor items of consumable stationery and printer ink cartridges.

9. INSURANCES

In accordance with Section 382 of the Act, Council is insured against public liability and professional indemnity claims. Councillors are included as a named insured on this Policy.

Insurance protection is only provided if a claim arises out of or in connection with the Councillor's performance of his or her civic duties, or exercise of his or her functions as a Councillor. All insurances are subject to any limitations or conditions set out in the policies of insurance.

Council shall pay the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim accepted by Council's insurers, whether defended or not.

Appropriate travel insurances will be provided for any Councillors travelling on approved interstate and overseas travel on Council business.

8. LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Council may, if requested, indemnify or reimburse the reasonable legal expenses of:

- ▶ a Councillor defending an action arising from the performance in good faith of a function under the Act, provided that the outcome of the legal proceedings is favourable to the Councillor;
- ▶ a Councillor defending an action in defamation, provided the statements complained of were made in good faith in the course of exercising a function under the Act and the outcome of the legal proceedings is favourable to the Councillor; and
- ▶ a Councillor for proceedings before an appropriate investigative or review body, provided the subject of the proceedings arises from the performance in good faith of a function under the Act and the matter has proceeded past any initial assessment phase to a formal investigation or review and the investigative or review body makes a finding substantially favourable to the Councillor.

In the case of a Code of Conduct complaint made against a Councillor, legal costs will only be made available where the matter has been referred by the CEO/Code of Conduct Coordinator to a conduct

reviewer and the conduct reviewer has commenced a formal investigation of the matter and makes a finding substantially in favour of the Councillor.

Legal expenses incurred in relation to proceedings arising out of the performance by a Councillor of his or her functions under the Act are distinguished from expenses incurred in relation to proceedings arising merely from something that a Councillor has done during his or her term in office. For example, expenses arising from an investigation as to whether a Councillor acted corruptly would not be covered by this section.

Council will not meet the legal costs:

- of legal proceedings initiated by a Councillor under any circumstances; or
- of a Councillor seeking advice in respect of possible defamation, or in seeking a non-litigious remedy for possible defamation; or
- for legal proceedings that do not involve a Councillor performing their role as a Councillor.

Reimbursement of expenses for reasonable legal expenses must have Council approval by way of a resolution at a Council meeting prior to costs being incurred.

PART B: FACILITIES

9. GENERAL FACILITIES FOR ALL COUNCILLORS

Council will provide the following facilities to Councillors to assist them to effectively discharge their civic duties and they will be of a standard deemed by the CEO as appropriate for the purpose.

9.1 Stationery

Council will provide the following stationery to Councillors each year:

- Business cards; and
- a name badge which may be worn at official functions, indicating that the wearer holds the office of a Councillor and/or Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

Councillors can submit for reimbursement the purchase of other stationery items that are deemed appropriate by the CEO.

9.2 Uniforms

Council will provide uniforms to Councillors in line with Council's adopted Uniform Colour and Style Palette for indoor staff, to the maximum value of \$200 per Councillor per year.

However, newly elected Councillors will be allocated a maximum of \$600 for their first year of office.

All uniforms purchased, using Council funds, must have the logo applied and return to Council on the Councillor ceasing to hold office.

9.3 Meeting Rooms

Councillors may book meeting rooms for official business in a specified Council building at no cost. Rooms may be booked through the CEO's Office.

9.4 Administrative support

Council will provide administrative support to all Councillors to assist them with their civic duties only. Administrative support may be provided by a member of Council's administrative staff, as arranged by the CEO or their delegate.

Council employees are expected to assist Councillors with civic duties only, and not assist with matters of personal or political interest, including campaigning.

10. ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR THE MAYOR

10.1 Mayoral Vehicle

Council will provide to the Mayor a maintained vehicle to a similar standard of other Council vehicles, with a fuel card. The vehicle will be supplied for use on Council business, professional development and attendance at the Council's offices.

The Mayor must keep a log book setting out the date, distance and purpose of all travel. This must include any travel for private benefit. The log book must be submitted to Council on a monthly basis.

The Mayoral Allowance will be reduced to cover the cost of any private travel recorded in the log book, calculated on a per kilometre basis by the rate set by the current Local Government (State) Award.

The acceptance/use of a mayoral vehicle is at the discretion of the elected Mayor.

10.2 Mayoral Office

Council will provide the Mayor with a furnished office incorporating a computer configured to Council's standard operating environment, telephone and meeting space.

10.3 Corporate Credit Card

Council will provide the Mayor with a Corporate Credit Card for use on Council business only. No cash withdrawals can be made.

The Mayor must provide details and receipts for all entries on the Card and abide by all the conditions of use as set out in Council's Corporate Credit Card Policy.

~~In performing his or her civic duties, the Mayor will may be assisted by a small number of staff providing administrative and secretarial support, as determined by the CEO.~~

~~Council employees are expected to work on official business only, and not for matters of personal or political interest, including campaigning.~~

PART C: PROCESSES

11. APPROVAL, PAYMENT AND REIMBURSEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Expenses should only be incurred by Councillors in accordance with the provisions of this Policy.

Approval for incurring expenses, or for the reimbursement of such expenses, should be obtained before the expense is incurred.

Up to the maximum limits specified in this Policy, approval for the following may be sought after the expense is incurred:

- local travel relating to the conduct of official business
- carer costs
- ICT expenditure.

Final approval for payments made under this Policy will be granted by the CEO or their delegate.

11.1 Direct payment

Council may approve and directly pay expenses. Requests for direct payment must be submitted to the Director Corporate Services for assessment against this Policy using the prescribed form, with sufficient information and time to allow for the claim to be assessed and processed.

11.2 Reimbursement

All claims for reimbursement of expenses incurred must be made on the prescribed form, supported by appropriate receipts and/or tax invoices and be submitted to the Director Corporate Services.

11.3 Advance payment

Council may pay a cash advance for Councillors attending approved conferences, seminars or professional development.

The maximum value of a cash advance is \$70 per day of the conference, seminar or professional development to a maximum of \$280.

Requests for advance payment must be submitted to the Director Corporate Services for assessment against this Policy using the prescribed form with sufficient information and time to allow for the claim to be assessed and processed.

Councillors must fully reconcile all expenses against the cost of the advance within one (1) month of incurring the cost and/or returning home. This includes providing to Council:

- a full reconciliation of all expenses, including appropriate receipts and/or tax invoices; and
- reimbursement to Council of any amount of the advance payment not spent in attending to official business or professional development.
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11.4 Notification

If a claim is approved, Council will make payment directly or reimburse the Councillor through accounts payable.

If a claim is refused, Council will inform the Councillor in writing that the claim has been refused and the reason for the refusal.

11.5 Reimbursement to Council

If Council has incurred an expense on behalf of a Councillor that exceeds a maximum limit, exceeds reasonable incidental private use or is not provided for in this Policy:

- Council will invoice the Councillor for the expense; and
- the Councillor will reimburse Council for that expense within fourteen (14) days of the invoice date.

If the Councillor cannot reimburse Council within fourteen (14) days of the invoice date, they are to submit a written explanation to the CEO. The CEO may elect to deduct the amount from the Councillor's allowance.

11.6 Timeframe for reimbursement

Unless otherwise specified in this Policy, Councillors must provide all claims for reimbursement within three (3) months of an expense being incurred. Claims made after this time cannot be approved.

12. DISPUTES

If a Councillor disputes a determination under this Policy, the Councillor should discuss the matter with the CEO.

If the Councillor and the CEO cannot resolve the dispute, the Councillor may submit a notice of motion to a Council meeting seeking to have the dispute resolved.

13. RETURN OR RETENTION OF FACILITIES

All stationery, uniforms and/or equipment supplied under this Policy are to be relinquished immediately upon a Councillor or Mayor ceasing to hold office or at the cessation of their civic duties.

Should a Councillor desire to keep any equipment allocated by Council, then this Policy enables the Councillor to make application to the CEO to purchase any such equipment. The CEO will determine whether such equipment can be purchased, an agreed fair market price or written down value for the item of equipment. It is anticipated that at the end of the term of the Council, the depreciated value will be zero.

The prices for all equipment purchased by Councillors will be recorded in Council's Annual Report.

14. REPORTING

Council will report on the provision of expenses and facilities to Councillors, as required in the Act and Regulations.

Detailed reports on the provision of expenses and facilities to Councillors will be publicly tabled at a Council meeting every six (6) months and published in full on Council's website. These reports will include expenditure summarised by individual Councillor and as a total for all Councillors.

~~15. AUDITING~~

~~The operation of this Policy, including claims made under the Policy, will be included in Council's audit program, and an audit undertaken at least every two (2) years.~~

15. BREACHES

Suspected breaches of this Policy are to be reported to the CEO.

Alleged breaches of this Policy shall be dealt with by following the processes outlined for breaches of the Code of Conduct Policy, as detailed in the Code and in the Procedures for the Administration of the Code.

16. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer to monitor the adequacy of this Policy and recommend appropriate changes.

This Policy will be formally reviewed every four (4) years but within the first 12 months of a new term of Council or as needed, whichever comes first.

17. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS, DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Associated Documents

- ▶ OLG - Local Government Remuneration Tribunal
- ▶ OLG - Guidelines for the Payment of Expenses and the Provision of Facilities for Mayors and Councillors in NSW, 2009
- ▶ OLG - Pecuniary Interest Guidelines (June 2006)
- ▶ OLG - Circular 09-36 Guidelines for Payment of Expenses and Facilities
- ▶ OLG - Circular 05-08 Legal Assistance for Councillors and Council Employees
- ▶ OLG – Circular 17-17 Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy – Better Practice Template
- ▶ Local Government (State) Award (current)
- ▶ NSW Department Premier & Cabinet - NSW Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009.

- MRC Policy - Code of Conduct Policy (POL-100)
- MRC Policy - Code of Meeting Practice (POL-101)
- MRC Policy - Councillor Access to Information and Interaction with Staff Policy (POL-105)
- MRC Policy – Corporate Credit Card Policy (POL-204)
- MRC Policy - Uniform Policy (POL-500)
- MRC Guideline – Uniform Colour and Style Palette

Definitions and Acronyms

Term	Definition
Accompanying person	A spouse, partner or de facto or other person who has a close personal relationship with or provides carer support to a Councillor
Appropriate refreshments	Food and beverages, excluding alcohol, provided by Council to support Councillors undertaking official business
Act	The Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
Annual Conference	Local Government NSW Annual Conference
clause	Unless stated otherwise, a reference to a clause is a reference to a clause of this Policy
Code of Conduct	The Code of Conduct adopted by Council
Councillor	A person elected or appointed to civic office as a member of the governing body of Council who is not suspended, including the Mayor
CEO	The CEO of Council and includes their delegate or authorised representative
ICT	Telecommunications and Information Communications and Technology
Incidental person use	Use that is infrequent and brief and use that does not breach this Policy or the Code of Conduct
Long distance intrastate travel	Travel to other parts of NSW of more than three hours duration by private vehicle
Maximum limit	The maximum limit for an expense or facility provided in the text and summarised in the table on Page 2 of this Policy
Official business	Functions that the Mayor or Councillors are required or invited to attend to fulfil their legislated role and responsibilities for Council or result in a direct benefit for Council and/or for the local government area, and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‣ meetings of Council and committees of the whole ‣ meetings of committees facilitated by Council ‣ civic receptions hosted or sponsored by Council ‣ meetings, functions, workshops and other events to which attendance by a Councillor has been requested or approved by Council
Professional development	A seminar, conference, training course or other development opportunity relevant to the role of a Councillor or the Mayor
Regulation	The Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 (NSW)
Year	The financial year, that is the 12 month period commencing on 1 July each year

19. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version No.	Details	Date	CM9 Reference	Resolution No.
1	Initial Issue –	19 July 16 to 8 Aug 17	VF/17/102632	170716
2	Review of Policy to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ adopt best practice as per OLG Circular 17-17 (Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy – Better Practice Template); ▸ update to the Murray River Council style and logo; and ▸ Change of name of the Policy 	8 Aug 17 to 17 Apr 18	VF/17/102632	080817
3	Review of Policy to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ increase to majority of maximum amounts; ▸ alter travel times ▸ ensure Legal assistance clauses are consistent with OLG Councillor and Facilities Policy – Better Practice Template; and ▸ Add last paragraph to Part D, Section 13 (Return or retention of facilities), 13.2. 	17 April 18 to DRAFT	VF/17/102632	030418
4	Review of Policy in line with the Local Government Act 1993 and current practises.	DRAFT	VF/17/102632	

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy at any time
This Policy is scheduled for review after September 2026

NOTE:

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DISCLAIMER:

This document was formulated to be consistent with Murray River Council's legislative obligations and with the scope of Council's powers. This document should be read in conjunction with relevant legislation, guidelines and codes of practice. In the case of any discrepancies, the most recent legislation should prevail. This document does not constitute legal advice. Legal advice should be sought in relation to particular circumstances and liability will not be accepted for losses incurred as a result of reliance on this document.