



Greater Dandenong Policy

Travel Policy

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| Directorate: | Corporate Services | | |
| Responsible Officer: | Mick Jaensch | | |
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1. Purpose

This policy has been developed to provide guidelines for business related travel Councillors, employees and volunteers. It:

- clarifies the approval process for interstate and overseas travel by Councillors, employees or volunteers in an official capacity;
- ensures effective reporting mechanisms are in place;
- outlines the process for reimbursement of expenses associated with such travel; and
- ensures the statutory requirements are met regarding entries into the *Overseas or Interstate Travel Register*.

2. Background

It is recognised that there are occasions when council representatives, whether Councillors employees or volunteers, will need to undertake interstate or overseas travel in the course of council business.

This policy ensures that any such travel is transparent to the community and has an identifiable benefit to Council and/or to the municipality of the City of Greater Dandenong. It applies when the travel is associated with the person's role or position within Council including carrying out work duties, learning and development activities and/or representing Council.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors, employees and volunteers of the City of Greater Dandenong.

4. References

- Originally adopted at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 9 June 2009
- Regulation 12(a) of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015* in reference to the keeping and maintaining of an *Overseas or Interstate Travel Register*.
- Councillor Support, Reimbursement and Accountability Policy

*Reasonable' and 'Reasonably'– a discussion around what is considered 'reasonable' should be undertaken with the manager prior to it being authorised

5. Council Policy

Interstate Travel Authorisation

Councillors

Interstate travel by Councillors must be authorised by the Mayor.

Where the Mayor is intending to undertake interstate travel this must be authorised by the Chief Executive Officer.

All travel must be approved in advance of any bookings being made and any travel being undertaken.

Employees or Volunteers

Interstate travel by employees or volunteers must be approved by the appropriate Director. If the applicant reports to the Chief Executive Officer, the travel must be authorised by the Chief Executive Officer.

All travel must be approved in advance of any bookings being made and any travel being undertaken.

Overseas Travel Authorisation

All overseas travel for employees, volunteers and Councillors must be approved at an Ordinary meeting of Council. The application for approval must include full details of the travel, who is planned to take part in the travel, a draft itinerary, costs, reasons for travel and what Council and/or community benefits will result from the trip.

All overseas travel must be approved by Council resolution prior to any bookings being made and/or travel undertaken.

New Zealand Travel Authorisation

The authorisation level required to undertake travel to New Zealand will be the same as that required for interstate travel.

All travel to New Zealand must be approved in advance of any bookings being made and any travel being undertaken.

Cost Effectiveness

All travellers on Council business either interstate or overseas must:

- exercise care in incurring expenses during approved travel; and
- make business travel arrangements that ensure best value to Council.



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Principals for Approving Travel

When considering the appropriateness of travel requests, the Authorising Officer must consider:

- whether the intended destination is safe and is not considered a High Risk Country;
- whether the absence of the employee or Councillor is convenient to Council/Business Unit;
- whether it is appropriate for Council to be funding the travel; and
- will the travel add value to Council.

Air Transportation

Class of Travel

Air travel will be by economy class for all Councillors, employees and volunteers unless otherwise determined by way of Council resolution or as per Workplace Adjustment Guidelines.

Airline tickets are not transferable and cannot be used for defraying or offsetting any other costs, including the costs of other persons accompanying the Councillor or the employee.

Councillors, employees and volunteers may upgrade the class of travel at their own expense.

Ground Transportation

Transfers

For transfers between the airport and accommodation, the most cost effective option should be taken (e.g. airport/hotel bus, train or other form of public transport) should be used wherever possible.

For interstate travel, cab charge vouchers for the Mayor and Councillors can be obtained from the Mayor and Councillors Executive Assistant, and cab charges for employees can be obtained through the Financial Services Unit. Any unused cab charge vouchers must be returned to the issuing officer immediately after the proposed travel event, including where part or all of the proposed travel has not taken place.

All Other Ground Transportation

The mode of ground travel will be determined by practicality to the intended traveller and cost effectiveness to Council.

Rental Car

In the event that a rental car is required, the most appropriate car is to be arranged bearing in mind cost and travel requirements.

Any infringements incurred during the use of a rental car will be at the personal responsibility of the driver. The employee, volunteer or Councillor is responsible for ensuring they hold the appropriate licenses to drive the vehicle in the location of hire and that they adhere to the local laws in relation to driving including blood alcohol limits etc.

Car Parking Fees

Where costs for parking are less than the cost of a return taxi fare from the Councillor's, employee's or volunteer's private residence to the Airport, Council will meet the cost of airport

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parking, including the travel cost of Councillor's, employee's and volunteer's private vehicles for the duration of the trip in accordance with Council's Claiming Expenses for Business Related Travel Guideline, utilising the Travel Expenses claim form. The guideline and form can be found on Webstar under HR Policies and Guidelines.

Use of Private Vehicle

Where a Councillor, employee, or volunteer uses his/her car to attend an approved interstate meeting, conference, seminar or engagement the total reimbursement for use of the vehicle shall not exceed the cost of air travel at the specified class including transfers.

Use of Council Vehicle

Permission will be required for use of Council vehicles to travel interstate per the Motor Vehicle Code of Practice.

Accommodation

Accommodation will be at standard hotel/motel business class/4 star in single room accommodation where reasonably* possible.

Where a traveller does not have a company credit card, an arrangement will be made with the accommodation venue to charge expenses back to Council. Reasonable* costs for personal telephone calls and internet access for Council business will be reimbursed by Council.

The cost of non-essential room extras such as the mini bar or in-house movies will not be reimbursed by Council. If these costs are incurred on a Council credit card, they must be reimbursed to Council within a reasonable* period on return from the travel (i.e. one (1) month unless otherwise approved by Mayor, CEO or Director).

Meals

Reasonable* daily meal requirements of individuals will be reimbursed by Council on presentation of receipts. No reimbursement will be made without original receipts which meet the tax invoice requirements.

Reimbursement of Incidental Costs

Reasonable* out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed by Council on presentation of original receipts which meet tax invoice requirements. No reimbursement will be made without receipts. Guidelines for the reimbursement of costs to Councillors is detailed in the Councillor Support, Reimbursement and Accountability Policy.

Personal Travel

Arrangements for any personal travel will need to be made with the travel service provider and paid for directly by the incumbent. Employees and volunteers are responsible for submitting the appropriate leave applications in accordance with Council leave procedures for the periods of personal travel. The employee or volunteer is also responsible for taking out all the necessary insurances to cover the periods of personal travel.

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Reporting Requirements

A detailed written pre-report shall be submitted to Council for prior approval of all overseas travel requests.

A detailed written post-report must be submitted to Council by the Councillor(s), employee(s) or volunteer(s) who have travelled overseas in an official capacity within one (1) month upon return of the approved trip. The report shall provide comment on the value of the trip, benefits to the Council and/or the local community and provide recommendations for further action if appropriate. The report may be submitted by individuals or as a joint report and may be submitted to a Council meeting or Councillor Briefing Session.

Councillors, employees or volunteers travelling interstate may wish to submit or table a detailed report at Council or at a Councillor Briefing Session.

Exceptions

- Where a Councillor has attended an interstate conference or seminar it is appropriate for the Councillor to give a verbal report at an open meeting of Council during *Reports from Councillors/Delegates and Councillor Questions* or at a Councillor Briefing Session.
- Where more than one Councillor has attended an interstate conference or seminar a nominated Councillor may speak on behalf of all other Councillors.
- If a Councillor has attended a fully-funded, overseas conference as a Council representative on a regional association then that Councillor may choose to give a verbal report at an open meeting of Council during *Reports from Councillors/Delegates and Councillor Questions* or at a Councillor Briefing Session, or submit a written report to Council.

Statutory Register for Overseas or Interstate Travel

In relation to employees or volunteers, all travel and associated costs must be submitted for inclusion in the *Overseas or Interstate Travel Register*. It is the responsibility of the individual traveller to provide all supporting documentation relating to the cost of the trip within a reasonable* period on return from the travel (i.e. one (1) month unless otherwise approved by Mayor, CEO or Director)

In the case of Councillors, all supporting documentation, including receipts (or copies thereof), relating to cost can be submitted to the Mayor and Councillors Executive Assistant who is to ensure its inclusion in the *Overseas or Interstate Travel Register*.

Travel Expenses for Mayor

All intended overseas travel must be approved by Council resolution.

In accordance with the Councillor Support, Reimbursement and Accountability Policy all business related travel expenses for the Mayor on official business, will be reimbursed for both interstate and overseas travel subject to the presentation of original receipts which meet tax invoice requirements.

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If a situation occurs that the Mayor is unable to attend a specific interstate or overseas trip, Council may resolve to nominate another Councillor to represent the Mayor should Mayoral representation be required. In this instance, all travel expenses for the Mayoral representative will be covered by Council subject to presentation of original receipts which meet tax invoice requirements.

In instances where a spouse, partner or another family member accompanies the Mayor or a Councillor representing the Mayor on an approved trip, the Mayor or Councillor shall meet the full cost incurred of any additional cost they incur in relation to (non-business related) travel, meals, entertainment or accommodation costs incurred.

Councillor Spouse and/or Other Family Member

In instances where a spouse or another family member accompanies a Councillor, employee or volunteer on an approved trip, the Councillor, employee or volunteer shall meet the full cost incurred for the accompanying party. These costs should be paid for in full to Council prior to the trip being undertaken if practicable. Any additional costs incurred by the Councillor, employee or volunteer's spouse or family member shall be reimbursed to Council within 14 days of return from travel.

Exceptions

- If there is no additional accommodation cost for the spouse/family member then Council will bear the full cost of the accommodation.
- Where the accompanying person is a person who provides fulltime carer support to the Councillor, employee or volunteer, council will cover the costs of the accompanying person in accordance with the conditions outlined in this policy and the Councillor Support and Reimbursement Policy.

Use of corporate credit card

If traveling interstate or overseas, credit card limits may be increased upon application to the Financial Services Unit to reflect the estimated expenses likely to be incurred during the course of the trip.

If an increase in a credit card limit is required, five (5) clear working days notice must be given to the Financial Services Unit in order to make the necessary arrangements.

Credit card limits will revert to the previous approved limit on return from the travel.

Mobile Phone Coverage & Internet Access on Mobile Devices

When an overseas trip is approved in accordance with this policy for Councillors, employees or volunteers, then Council will upgrade individual traveller's mobile phone coverage to include international roaming. Where applicable this may also include internet access for other Council supplied mobile devices such as iPads. Five (5) clear working days notice must be given to the Information Technology Services Unit in order to make the necessary arrangements. Council will cover the cost of the provision of international roaming services and all council business related calls. Although Council recognises that some personal calls may be made as a result of the business travel, the Councillor, employee or volunteer will reimburse Council for all calls of a personal nature in excess of a reasonable* duration and/or cost. As a guide, reasonable* usage would include one to two calls per day of no more than 15 minutes in total duration.

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If a Councillor, employee or volunteer extends an overseas trip for personal reasons then they will reimburse Council for international roaming services and call costs outside the days of the approved council related business.

If a Councillor, employee or volunteer travels overseas on personal business and takes their council-funded mobile phone or mobile device with them, then the Councillor, employee or volunteer must reimburse council for all international roaming charges, internet access and call costs. Alternatively the Councillor, employee or volunteer can purchase their own SIM card to place in their council-funded mobile phone or device for the time they are away and cover all costs associated with or incurred on this personal SIM card during their travel. The Councillor, employee or volunteer is required to adhere to the policies associated with the council provided mobile devices including due care in relation to maintaining confidentiality and protection of a Council asset.

All reimbursements owing to Council for personal use must be paid within a reasonable* period of return from the trip i.e. within one (1) month (subject to the costs being identified within this time i.e. depending on billing cycles)

Other

If Council resolves it to be beneficial to Council and/or the community that more than one Councillor, employee or volunteer represents the City while traveling overseas, then all attendees will be reimbursed in accordance with this policy.

6. Related Documents

- Overseas and Interstate Travel Register/Form
- Claiming Expenses for Business Related Travel Guideline and associated Travel Expenses claim form
- Motor Vehicle Code of Practice
- Workplace Adjustment Guidelines
- Code of Conduct - Staff
- Code of Conduct - Councillors
- Procurement Policy
- Councillor Support, Reimbursement and Accountability Policy
- Mayoral Representation Policy
- Purchasing Card Policy
- *Local Government Act 1989*