



## COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCE POLICY

<b>Policy No.:</b>	GTC-C-03	<b>Policy type:</b>	Council
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Corporate & Community	<b>Policy expires:</b>	October 2026
<b>Approved by:</b>	Council	<b>Approved on:</b>	23 April 2024
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### Document History/Version Control

Version No.	Date	Details	Comment
13	February 2020	Revise travel allowances	Approved by Council Min. Ref. No.39/20
14	May 2021	Update alignment with Strategic Plan	Approved by Council Min. Ref. No.070/21
15	November 2021	Include Mayoral expenses and Bring Your Own Device	Approved by Council Min. Ref. No.048/22
16	February 2024	Review of content and update to new template	Approved by Council Min. Ref. No. 54/24

### Amendment/Administrative History

Date	Details	Comment	Authorised by

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## 1. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the policy is to ensure transparency and equity in the payment of allowances and reimbursement of reasonable expenses to Councillors, to carry out their duties and responsibilities, in accordance with community expectation and legislated requirements.

## 2. TYPE OF POLICY

As per Section 8 of Policy GTC-12, this policy (GTC-C-03) is categorised as a Council Policy.

This categorisation is consistent with the definitions as stated in Policy GTC-12 which are as follows:

**Council** - Policies pertaining to the Governance of the Council and the activities of its elected members, including the establishment of Committees, and the government of the municipality including resident and ratepayer compliance policies and by-laws.

**Operational** - Policies pertaining to the operational, administrative, and internal matters of the Council, including internal governance, internal committees, and operational matters of service delivery.

## 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to George Town Council elected members.

## 4. DEFINITIONS

Not applicable.

## 5. LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

**George Town Council Strategic Plan 2020-2030**

Future Direction 4

Leadership and Accountable Governance

## 6. RELATED LEGISLATION

*Local Government Act 1993* - sections 340A(3), 72(1)(cb)

*Local Government (General) Regulations 2015* - sections 42(2), 42(2A), 42(3)

## Related Policies

Information Disclosure Policy (GTC-C-02)

Councillor's Code of Conduct (GTC-3)

## 7. RISK CONSIDERATIONS

As stated in Council's Risk Appetite Statement, we are prepared to take on measured risk and will do so with informed decision-making practices. We will address uncertainty through open and frank discussions to identify and manage risk and avoid personal perceptions and biases from hindering our objectivity.

## 8. POLICY

### 8.1 Introduction

Councillors are entitled to receive allowances and reimbursement of reasonable expenses, while performing their duties. Mayors and deputy mayors are entitled to additional allowances, to reflect the higher level of duties they undertake in their official capacity. The *Local Government Act 1993* and *Local Government (Regulations) 2015* stipulate the allowances payable to Councillors. It is a legislated requirement that councils adopt a policy, in respect of payment of expenses incurred by Councillors, in performing their duties.

### 8.2 Allowances and reasonable expenses

The base amount payable to elected members is specified in Schedule 4 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015*. The amounts are adjusted annually for inflation on 1 November each year, using an indexation process. The inflationary factor is calculated using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Wage Price Index (WPI) for Tasmania.

Allowances are rounded to the nearest whole dollar and shall be paid in arrears on a fortnightly or monthly basis at the request of the Councillor.

Section 43 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015* enables reimbursement for reasonable expenses in relation to telephone, internet, travel, stationery and office supplies and the care of any person, who is dependent on the Councillor, and who requires the care while a Councillor is performing their duties or functions.

Claims over six (6) months old shall not be recognised.

A Councillor, Mayor or Deputy Mayor may decide not to receive part or all of an allowance, notification of which must be provided in writing to the General Manager.

### 8.3 Travel Reimbursement

Councillors are entitled to be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket travel expenses, incurred in relation to the discharge of their function as a Councillor, in respect to the following:

1. Council Meetings and Workshops.
2. Council Special Committees.
3. Meetings where Councillors, or their proxy, are directly appointed as a Council delegate.
4. Constituted meetings of incorporated community or sporting groups within the municipality.

5. Seminars, conferences, and professional development opportunities hosted by LGAT specifically for elected members.
6. Council events where Council management have requested a Councillor to assist.
7. Notwithstanding the above, any other claim for reimbursement where Council formally approve attendance at any event, meeting, or function.
8. Councillors are able to claim travel to and/or from their residence or workplace.

Additional considerations are that:

- Councillor reimbursement for travel will not include travelling by a Councillor to meet with constituents on their own initiative.
- Councillors can only claim reimbursement for an actual journey undertaken to perform their duties mentioned above.
- The General Manager is to check the accuracy of travel claims i.e. kilometres.
- If Councillors are unsure about the eligibility of a claim as outlined in this Policy, the option to check with the General Manager to provide clarity is recommended.

Reimbursement for travel shall be either:

- I. At the rate prescribed and adjusted by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) from time to time, where councillors use their own vehicle; or
- II. Actual out of pocket expenses to a maximum value not greater than the equivalent as calculated in I. above.

Councillors are required to submit an account detailing:

- o The date of travel.
- o Reason/type of Council related travel (as per 1-7 above)
- o Kilometres and travel details or receipts as appropriate.
- o A copy of the minutes or attendance register recording attendance of the Councillor, except where minutes are held by Council. Where no attendance record is available, other evidence or a signed statement will be required to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

## **8.4 Communications Allowance and Electronic Devices**

### **Mayoral Communications Allowance**

The Mayor shall be paid an allowance for telephone rental, telephone calls and internet usage at a rate of \$238 per month, with CPI adjustments to be calculated and applied in the same manner as is stated above.

### **Councillor Telephone and Internet Access Allowance**

All Councillor's shall be paid an allowance for telephone rental, telephone calls and internet usage. The allowance was set at \$121 per month in November 2021. The allowance is adjusted annually for inflation, from 1 November each year, at the same time as the statutory Councillor allowance. The Hobart Consumer Price Index (CPI) figure is used to calculate the adjusted communications allowance.

Electronic communication is the principal source between Council officers and elected members.

Council will meet the cost of the initial acquisition of electronic tablets for all elected members and provide the appropriate software. The electronic tablet is to be returned to Council, on the completion of the elected member's term.

A Councillor may opt to bring their own electronic device for use in carrying out their official duties. A reimbursement of \$50 per month will be provided to councillors who bring their own device. Councillors providing their own device are required to ensure the security of Council information, to the satisfaction of the General Manager and in accordance with the Council's Information Technology Framework.

### **8.5 Mayoral Vehicle and Mayoral Expenses**

When requested, a pool vehicle from Council's fleet will be made available to the Mayor, or a Councillor nominated by the Mayor, to undertake Council business functions.

Reimbursement will be made to the Mayor for minor and/or incidental expenses up to a maximum of \$250 per financial year, as approved by the General Manager, and incurred by the Mayor (or Deputy Mayor when standing in for the Mayor), while carrying out formal functions or duties as Mayor.

The General Manager will provide a report on these expenses to council workshops, on a quarterly basis.

### **8.6 Conferences & Training Courses**

Requests to attend conferences or training courses are approved by the General Manager or the Mayor as required.

### **Outside George Town Council Municipal area**

Where a Councillor is required to attend a conference or training course outside the George Town Municipal area, and represents the George Town Council in doing so, expenses will be reimbursed for the costs of accommodation, meals, incidental expenses, travel expenses i.e. airfares, taxi fares or vehicle travel in the Councillor's own car, course fees and/or conference registration, in accordance with ATO guidelines.

Incidental expenses will be reimbursed to the Councillor upon provision of receipts and supporting documentation.

Where a Councillor chooses an upgrade in accommodation, the difference between the available base rate accommodation and the upgrade, is the responsibility of the councillor.

The reimbursement of expenses relates to those incurred by the Councillor only. However, in line with GTC-17 Diversity & Equitable Inclusion Policy, should a Councillor require additional assistance, reimbursement for any additional costs will be provided as approved by the General Manager.

### **Civic Functions within George Town Council Municipal area**

Expenses will be reimbursed for the costs of meals and incidental costs, to attend events of community associations or groups, where the Councillor is appointed as Council's representative.

### **8.7 Councillor claims for care of dependents**

Where a Councillor incurs any care expenses for a dependent, who requires the care while the Councillor is carrying out their duties or functions as a Councillor, these expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with the following conditions:

1. All claims are net of subsidy.
2. Supporting receipts must be supplied.
3. The claim period is the minimum period required for the care of the dependent or the minimum period reservation period, as determined by the service provider.
4. Provide a duly completed claims form that contains statements specifying and certifying -
  - a. the specific council business being undertaken when care was required and/or
  - b. where no Council business was undertaken, the care claim period was required in anticipation of the undertaking of Council business; and
5. In cases of the minimum reservation period being utilized, evidence of booking options available from the provider will be provided every six months.

### **8.8 Administrative Assistance**

Council will provide a reasonable level of administrative assistance to enable elected members to carry out their official duties. The General Manager will have sole discretion in determining the extent of assistance which can be provided.

### **8.9 Stationery and Office Supplies**

Upon request, Council shall provide councillors with reasonable quantities of standard stationery, held or obtained generally, for the organisation's requirements. Stationery may include but is not necessarily limited to paper, writing implements, diaries, writing pads, digital storage media, envelopes, and the like.

Council will provide and maintain a printer, ink, and paper for the printing of Council documentation, if requested.

Business cards (250 per calendar year) will be provided to each elected member and can be requested through Council's Executive Assistant - Governance.

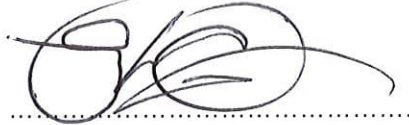
Requests for stationery will be made by way of a verbal request, written submissions, or completion of a requisition form to the General Manager.

### **8.10 Reporting**

Section 72(1)(cb) of the *Local Government Act 1993* requires councils to include a statement of the total allowances and expenses paid to the mayor, deputy mayor and councillors, in its annual report. Reimbursements paid to Councillors are reported within the Travel and Expenses sub-categories within the Annual Audited Financial Statements.

## 9. IMPLEMENTATION & REVIEW OF POLICY

Implementation of this Policy rests with the General Manager. This policy will be reviewed in November every four years, following Council elections.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shane Power', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Shane Power  
**GENERAL MANAGER**