

POLICY



Date adopted: 30/05/2017
File no: 128715-2
Minute number: 148/2017

Policy title: CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR ATTENDANCE

Directorate: ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES

Branch: CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

- Policy objectives:**
1. To provide clear direction in relation to attendance and participation at conferences and seminars at the local, regional, state, national and international level by councillors and employees to pursue the following outcomes and benefits:
 - (a) continuing professional development
 - (b) organisational capacity building including keeping current with best practice and emerging developments/issues in areas of relevance to Council
 - (c) inter agency and organisational partnership and relationship building
 - (d) promotion of Council activities, projects and programs
 - (e) promotion of the City and the Council organisation.
 2. To detail the reporting requirements following the attendance of councillors/employees at a duly authorised conference or seminar.

Policy scope:

This policy applies to all councillors and employees in relation to the approval requirements and attendance at conferences and seminars.

Definitions:

Term	Definition
Conference and seminar	A professionally organised event, involving single, multiple concurrent or separate sessions where a series of information is presented and/or exchanged. For the purposes of this policy it pertains to events where an employee or councillor is registered as a conference/seminar delegate.
Delegate	A councillor or employee and means 'the person registered to attend the conference/seminar'.
Overseas	Excludes New Zealand for the purposes of approval/s but not in relation to reporting requirements under the Local Government Regulation 2012.

Policy statement:

1. Professional development of councillors and employees is strongly encouraged.

For the purposes of conference attendance the following approvals apply:

- (a) overseas travel (a resolution of Council). Staff must have sought prior approval from the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) prior to submission to Council
 - (b) in accordance with delegation of authority titled, 'Conference and Seminar Attendance and Business Related Travel Expenditure'
 - (c) via adopted Budget; or
 - (d) via specific resolution of Council.
2. It is essential that the conference or seminar program is relevant to the councillor/employee's continuing professional development or area of responsibility and that the program represents value for money to Council. The relevance is not limited to technical content and may be directed towards the broadening of a councillor/employee's professional development.
 3. Having been duly authorised, delegates to an approved conference or seminar shall have the discretion to incur expenditure necessarily ancillary to their attendance subject to adherence to Council's 'Corporate Travel and Accommodation' policy.
 4. Purchase of conference or seminar proceedings, papers, audio or video tapes where the information is deemed valuable to convey information about the conference or seminar content that could not be conveyed as well by other means is permissible. Business papers and/or agendas from the conference or seminar, or items purchased under this clause are to be forwarded to the Council's library to enable access and referral purposes by other employees.
 5. In the case of the Mayor, councillors, the Chief Executive Officer, directors and managers only, reasonable expenses incurred in hosting a meal or refreshments for other conference delegates, sponsors or business guests in the course of conducting business or in extending bona fide hospitality is acceptable.
 6. Hosting is to be extended for genuine business-related purposes only. Managers may host other conference delegates, sponsors or business guests and prior approval of such hosting purchases up to a maximum value of \$100 per event must be obtained from the relevant manager's director. Payment of alcohol purchases relating to hosting are not to be made by Council's credit card.
 7. The following procedure is to be undertaken for this policy:
 - (a) Requests for approval to attend a conference/seminar should be submitted and approved either in the relevant branch's conferences and seminars proposal as part of the Council's annual budget process, in advance on Council's by completing and sending the 'Travel Proposal Including Approval To Attend Conferences Involving Travel' to the relevant delegated officer in accordance with the delegation of authority titled 'Conference and Seminar Attendance and Business Related Travel', or via report to Council. Details and costs of associated travel and accommodation (if applicable) should be included in the proposal.
 - (b) All requests for conference approval registrations are to include the appropriate account number/s to be used for costing of expenditure, and sufficient budget must be available.

- (c) Council's form titled 'Travel Proposal Including Approval to Attend Conferences Involving Travel' must be completed for all conferences and seminars. The completed form, or copy of, must be attached to all payments relating to the conference/seminar, eg. credit card reconciliation and/or miscellaneous payment form for payments relating to conference registration, travel and/or accommodation.
 - (d) When reviewing requests for approval to attend conferences or seminars the delegated authority must take into consideration the number of delegates from Council who have been approved or are likely to attend the nominated conference or seminar.
 - (e) Attendances by employees at all overseas conferences must be approved by ELT in the first instance and then require a Council resolution.
 - (f) The person arranging the conference/seminar registration is to ensure that the required authorisation of conference attendance and expenditure is obtained prior to any registration being made. Registrations should be arranged in sufficient time to ensure that any discounted fees are obtained.
 - (g) Requests for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses are to be submitted (on a petty cash form for amounts less than \$100 or a miscellaneous payments form for amounts greater than \$100), along with the relevant receipts, to the delegated authority for approval.
8. To assist officers arranging conference/seminar registrations, requests requiring Council approval are to be referred to the relevant standing committee at an early date to allow sufficient time for registrations to be effected in an efficient and cost effective manner.
 9. When determining value for money, consideration should also be given to the cost associated with the loss of productivity from normal daily duties and also the overall costs and benefits to Council where multiple delegates are proposed to attend the one conference/seminar.
 10. Learnings from the conference/seminar must be transferred back to the workplace - eg. sharing learning with peers, staff etc. and the delegate must assess the best method of ensuring that this occurs. The delegate must assess what actions/learnings can be implemented resulting from the conference attendance and put in place processes to ensure this occurs. Workplace seminar/s should be held to share and discuss learnings and how they can be applied in the workplace.
 11. Delegate/s reports, in the required format (Id: 6748298) must be prepared and submitted within two (2) weeks of return from the conference/seminar for all conferences attended. The completed report is to be distributed amongst the relevant Council staff and, where applicable, referred to the appropriate standing committee for consideration. The distribution of reports is as follows:
 - (a) any overseas/international conferences or seminars - must be referred to the appropriate standing committee and to relevant staff
 - (b) distribution within Council is:
 - (i) supervisor (minimum requirement)
 - (ii) other relevant staff depending upon the conference/seminar topic.
 12. Council officers are to obtain approval before presenting a paper to a conference/seminar. Approval in principle to present the paper must be obtained from the relevant director (or the Chief Executive Officer if a director is presenting). The content of the presentation is then to be approved by the relevant manager or the director.

13. Presentation of papers at conferences/seminars, other than for non-profit/charitable organisations, should be viewed not only as a learning opportunity, but from a commercial perspective. Negotiating support from conference organisers to meet costs associated with presenting a paper should be balanced against personal development or an opportunity for Council to be seen at the leading edge in a particular field. Any fees received in relation to the presentation of a paper must be paid to Council.

Related policies/legislation/other documents:

DOC ID	DOCUMENT TYPE	DOCUMENT NAME
8462701	Delegation of Authority	Conference and Seminar Attendance and Business Related Travel Expenditure
11118612	Form	Travel Proposal Including Approval To Attend Conferences Involving Travel
9252845	Form	Request for Incidental Travel Allowance Application Form
6748298	Template	Report on Conference/Seminar Attended
6290313	Policy	Corporate Travel and Accommodation