

POLICY



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Policy title: **CORPORATE TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION**

Directorate: ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES

Branch: CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Policy objective:

1. To provide clear direction for travel and accommodation arrangements for Councillors and Council employees who attend intra-state, interstate and overseas conferences, meetings, seminars, courses, study tours and promotional tours or similar, and to provide for the reimbursement of approved expenses at these events.
2. To ensure that, at all times, accountability and effective use of public monies is maintained.
3. To ensure that travel arrangements are administered in the most cost effective and efficient manner.
4. To detail the reporting requirements for overseas travel as per the Local Government Regulation 2012.
5. To meet the annual reporting requirements as per the Local Government Regulation 2012.

Policy scope:

This policy applies to all Councillors and employees in relation to domestic and overseas travel and accommodation arrangements for Councillors and Council employees.

Definitions:

TERM	DEFINITION
Delegate	Refers to a Councillor or employee and means "the person traveling".
Employee	Unless specified otherwise includes Council Award and contract employees but not contractors.
Lowest practical airfare (LPA)	The lowest fare available on the day the travel is booked, on a regular scheduled service (that is, not a charter flight), which suits the practical business needs of the traveller and: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) for outbound flights, leaves within a 45 minute window before the latest possible departure flight (b) for return flights, leaves within a 45 minute window after the earliest practical return flight time. Note: The 45 minute time window relates to only scheduled flight times departure, it does not relate to airline check-in times or travel time to the airport.

TERM	DEFINITION
	For the purpose of this policy, the LPA does not include charges levied by Travel Management Companies. However, any baggage charges levied by airlines are to be included in the LPA where the traveller has luggage that must be checked in.
Overseas	Excludes New Zealand for the purposes of approval/s but not in relation to reporting requirements under the Local Government Regulation 2012.
Supervisor	Used in this policy for approval purposes and means the next line of management as follows: (a) general staff - supervisor is the manager (b) manager - supervisor is the director (c) director - supervisor is the Chief Executive Officer (d) Chief Executive Officer - supervisor is the Mayor (e) councillor - supervisor is the Mayor (f) Mayor - the Chief Executive Officer and the Deputy Mayor.
Reasonable	Moderate in price and not deemed to be expensive by a 'reasonable person in the street'. As a guide, a reasonable amount for domestic meals are as follows: breakfast \$18.70 lunch \$21.00 dinner \$36.00

Policy statement:1. **Overseas travel**

- (a) All overseas travel (excluding New Zealand) must be the subject of a separate authorisation/resolution from Council, regardless of funding being approved during the annual budget process or provision of external funding/subsidy and requires the approval of Council's Executive Leadership Team (ELT) prior to submission to Council.
- (b) Employees or councillors intending to travel overseas on official Council business must provide details of their travel to the Risk Management and Insurance Co-ordinator to ensure coverage under Council's insurance policy and also to obtain the necessary twenty-four (24) hour contact number for emergencies.
- (c) The Finance Manager will keep a register of overseas travel for the organisation with enough detail to allow for reporting purposes in accordance with the requirements of section 188 of the Local Government Regulation 2012.
- (d) The register will contain overseas travel for councillors and employees with the following details:
 - (i) the name of the councillor or employee who undertook the overseas travel
 - (ii) if an employee undertook the overseas travel, the position held by the employee
 - (iii) the destination of the overseas travel
 - (iv) the purpose and cost of the overseas travel
 - (v) the Council adoption date and minute number approving the overseas travel (i.e. no overseas travel, except for New Zealand, should be undertaken without approval from Council via a report to the relevant standing committee)
 - (vi) the benefits arising from overseas travel.

- (e) A summarised expenditure figure is to be obtained by the Finance Manager from this register and provided to the CEO Office Manager by 1 September of each year, for inclusion in Council's annual report.
2. **General (overseas and domestic travel)**
- (a) Employees or councillors travelling on the Council's business shall have the discretion to incur reasonable and appropriate expenditure necessarily ancillary to their travel.
- (b) Prior arrangements must be made for the major expenses associated with the travel:
- (i) conference registration fees
 - (ii) accommodation charges
 - (iii) principle transport fares.
- (c) The following classes of expenditure shall be valid purposes for the exercise of the employees or councillors' discretion:
- (i) Transportation costs

Reasonable transportation or travel costs associated with conveying employees or councillors between the airport and other transportation centres and venues associated with the approved travel but not including valet parking at conference or other venues.
 - (ii) Classes of travel
 - Value for money is the paramount consideration in the booking of flights for air travel. Value for money is enhanced through strong competition between airlines. Accordingly, when booking air travel, employees and councillors must genuinely have regard to the lowest practical airfare (LPA), based on impartial consideration of the fares available and not based on personal preference for a particular airline.
 - All air travel is to be economy class, however for flights greater than three (3) hours, business class travel may be approved by resolution of the Council, or by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for employees, by the Mayor for the CEO and councillors, and by the Deputy Mayor and CEO for the Mayor.
 - Travel bookings are to be arranged via the most feasible route. Where an employee or councillor elects to drive rather than travel by air then a cost benefit analysis should be carried out and submitted with the travel proposal for approval. In the case of private vehicle use, Council will only reimburse fuel and vehicle costs, on production of tax invoices, up to the amount of the return airfare(s) (discounted available at the time) or lesser amount based on actual costs. In the case of Council vehicle use, Council will only pay for fuel and vehicle costs, on production of tax invoices where applicable, up to the amount of the return airfare(s) (discounted available at the time) or lesser amount based on actual costs.
 - (iii) Incidental allowance

Councillors or Council employees required to travel intra-state, interstate or overseas as part of their official duties shall be paid a daily incidental expense allowance for each day of travel ending with an overnight stay.

The incidental allowance is paid as per the below table:

Cost group	Incidental allowance (per day)
International travel	\$25.00
Intra-state and interstate travel	\$15.00

The allowance is not required to be acquitted upon return from the associated travel.

(iv) Meal expenses

Council will reimburse reasonable costs for:

- breakfast each morning associated with an overnight stay at accommodation arranged in connection with the travel or conference
- lunch whilst travelling or at a conference if not provided
- dinner in the evening associated with an overnight stay. Reasonable meal and beverage expenses other than alcohol, taken with the meal will be reimbursed.

(d) Accompanying guests

All costs associated with guests accompanying employees or councillors (including partners) are to be personally met by the employee or councillor unless prior approval has been obtained by resolution of the Council.

(e) Hosting

Hosting is to be extended for genuine business-related purposes only. All discretions exercised under this policy shall have due regard to keeping the expenditure to reasonable and justifiable levels.

In the case of the Mayor, councillors, the Chief Executive Officer and directors, reasonable expenses incurred in hosting a meal or refreshments for conference delegates, sponsors or business guests in the course of conducting business or in extending bona fide hospitality is acceptable.

Managers may host a meal or refreshment for conference delegates, sponsors or business guests up to a maximum value of \$100 per event at their discretion. The manager may, in extenuating circumstances, spend over \$100 with the express prior approval of their director, with the actual amount spent needing to fall with the 'reasonable test'.

The maximum value for hosting excludes those costs that would normally be covered by Council for a manager whilst attending a conference or travelling. Payment of alcohol purchases relating to hosting is not to be made by Council's credit card.

(f) Dry cleaning and laundry

Where the absence of the employee or councillor from home exceeds five (5) days, reasonable costs associated with dry-cleaning and/or laundry of clothing are permissible.

(g) Car hire

Car hire is to be approved prior to the travel by the relevant director for employees, the CEO for director, the CEO and Deputy Mayor for the Mayor, and the Mayor for the councillors.

- (h) All other expenditure for incidental costs such as items purchased from hotel/motel mini-bars, in-house videos/dvds, internet for personal use, tours, partners programs, entertainment, personal phone calls (except to notify immediate family of your arrival and well being) and other personal items or services will be at the expense of the employee or councillor.
- (i) With respect to amounts claimed for reimbursement under this policy, employees and councillors **must** obtain and include with any claim for reimbursement, documentation evidencing all expenditure concerned.
- (j) A councillor or employee travelling overseas is to maintain a daily diary of arrival and departure times, places visited, expenses, exchange rates (where available), etc. This is to be presented when submitting a claim for expenses.
- (k) The incurring of expenditure by means of the use of credit cards by authorised holders of credit cards will be strictly in accordance with the administrative procedures prescribed in the Council's "Use of Credit Cards and Other Credit Devices" policy. This policy details the types of services that may or may not be paid for by using a credit card or other credit device issued in the name of Logan City Council.

The main criteria to be followed are:

- (i) If a credit card is used to pay for the accommodation and travel costs of a number of persons, full details must be provided in respect of each person. A travel proposal should be prepared for each person covered by credit card transactions and certified by that person accordingly.
 - (ii) Credit cards may be utilised by authorised employees attending conferences etc. as approved Council employees or councillors, for the payment of accommodation and associated expenses, including meals and beverages other than alcohol, taken with meals, together with miscellaneous expenses, including laundry and work-related telephone expenses, but may not be used for the payment of entertaining (including hosting) expenses, other than in accordance with the Council's adopted policy on the incurring of such expenses.
 - (iii) When a credit card holder is personally involved in the expenditure being recovered, the statements and the supporting documentation must be submitted to the relevant manager, director, or the Chief Executive Officer in the case of expenditure by directors, for approval. Councillors and employee delegates who use their own credit cards to pay out-of-pocket expenses should follow the same procedures as set out above and complete a miscellaneous payment form for reimbursement of expenses.
- (l) Council acknowledges that councillors and employees may accrue airline reward and loyalty points associated with this policy. These accruals are at no extra cost to Council and Council is unable to have these points accrued directly to Council. Council therefore does not expect full recording and reimbursement to occur, but does expect such points to be used to help offset future travel where the extent of the accruals paid for by Council is significant.
 - (m) Council will provide travel insurance for employees and councillors whilst on official Council business. The insurance coverage is subject to the travel insurance policy's conditions and exclusions, including loss or damage to baggage and international medical expenses.

If travel includes private charter flights, the Risk Management and Insurance Co-ordinator must be notified prior to booking to ensure appropriate insurance cover is available.

Council will not provide travel insurance for personal/private travel, accompanying persons or consultants. These travellers will need to take out their own personal/private travel insurance.

- (n) Where changes to travel bookings etc. are arranged after the initial approval has been obtained then any such changes must be authorised by the relevant delegated officer who approved the original travel arrangements.
- (o) Where official travel is authorised for an employee or councillor and they extend the travel for personal reasons, reimbursement of expenses should only cover those expenses which would normally be incurred if the private element of the travel was not undertaken.
- (p) Approval of all leave in conjunction with or during trips must be included on the travel proposal form before being submitted to the delegated officer for consideration and approval of travel arrangements.

The following procedure is to be undertaken for this policy:

1. All travel arrangements for councillors must be arranged in consultation with the Executive Assistant to the Mayor and/or the Executive Support Officer to the Deputy Mayor.
2. A Travel Proposal form is to be completed and approved in accordance with this policy prior to any travel being undertaken.
3. The person affecting the travel and accommodation bookings is to ascertain that adequate funds are available and prepare detailed itineraries for the traveller and for Council (immediate supervisor) (a copy must be available to Council prior to the travel).
4. These itineraries should include, where possible, contact phone and facsimile numbers for each venue. This would assist Council and/or the employee or councillor's family to contact him or her in an emergency.
5. Requests for out-of-pocket expenses not covered by the incidental allowance are to be submitted by the employee or councillor upon their return.

Related policies/legislation/other documents:

DOC ID	DOCUMENT TYPE	DOCUMENT NAME
11118612	Form	Travel Proposal Including Approval to Attend Conferences
11288182	Form	Request for Incidental Travel Allowance
8462701	Delegation of Authority	Conference and Seminar Attendance and Business Related Travel Expenditure
6577300	Policy	Conference and Seminar Attendance
5884626	Policy	Entertainment and Hospitality Expenditure
6211670	Policy	Use of Credit Cards and Other Credit Devices
9393070	Form	Miscellaneous Payment
1611069	Form	Petty Cash Claim Voucher
8965436	Register	Overseas Travel Register