Elected Members Allowance, Benefits & Support Policy

Strategic Reference	**Leadership** *Priority Area 2: Engagement & Communication* Action 5.2.10 – Elected Members will demonstrate effective governance and community leadership through active participation in Council, committee meetings, regular engagement with residents, community groups and stakeholders to advocate for, and deliver on local priorities and represent the community's interests.
File reference	AR20/4364
Responsibility	Office of the Chief Executive Officer
Revision Number	14
Effective date	June 1999
Last revised date	August 2026
Minutes reference	243/26, 012/23, 244/22, 079/22, 004/22, 070/20, 244/18, 161/17, 175/16, 038/15, 256/14, 409/13, 324/12, 279/11
Next review date	First meeting of new Council following a periodic election
Applicable Legislation	Local Government Act 1999 Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 Local Government (Members Allowances and Benefits) Regulations 2015 Commonwealth Income Tax Assessment Act 1997
Related Policies	Behavioural Management Policy – Council Members Caretaker Policy Council Members' Training & Professional Development Policy
Related Documents	Register of Allowances and Benefits Council Members' Reimbursement Claim Form 1 Council Members' Reimbursement Claim Form 2

1. Introduction

Council will ensure that the payment of Elected Members' allowances, the reimbursement of expenses and the provision of benefits by the Council is accountable and transparent and in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1999* ("the LG Act") and the *Local Government (Members Allowances and Benefits) Regulations 2015* ("the Regulations").

This Policy sets out the provisions of the LG Act and Regulations in respect of Elected Member allowances, expenses and support.

Elected Members are paid an allowance for performing and discharging their functions and duties on Council. Section 59 of the Local Government Act provides (in part) that the role of an elected member, as a member of the governing body of the Council, is to:

- Participate in the deliberations and civic activities of the Council;
- Keep the Council's objectives and policies under review to ensure that they are appropriate and effective; and
- Keep the Council's resource allocation, expenditure and activities, and the efficiency and effectiveness of its service delivery, under review.

This Policy also explains the information that must be recorded within the Council's Register of Allowances and Benefits to ensure compliance with section 79 of the LG Act.

2. Definitions

"Dependant" refers to a dependant of the Elected Member requiring full or part time care. Expenses in association with reimbursement are incurred due to the Member's attendance at a prescribed meeting or function or activity on the business of Council. A person can be considered a dependant if they meet the criteria as:

- spouse
- child
- any other person that the Elected Member is in an interdependent relationship with
- a person who is substantially financially dependent on the Member

"Eligible Journey" means a journey (in either direction) between the principal place of residence, or a place or work, of an Elected Member, and the place of a prescribed meeting.

"Function or activity on the business of Council" includes official Council functions (ie. Mayoral function), dinners associated with Council, citizenship ceremonies, official visits, attendance at meetings of community groups and organisations as an appointed delegate of Council (but not to attend meetings of community groups, individuals or organisations when fulfilling the role of local representative).

"Prescribed Meeting" means a meeting of the Council or Council committee, or an informal gathering, discussion, workshop, briefing, training course or similar activity which is directly related to the performance or discharge of the roles or duties of the member – section 77(1)(a) LG Act.

3. Policy Objective

To ensure Elected Member allowances, the reimbursement of expenses and the provision of benefits, facilities and support by the Council are compliant with the *Local Government Act 1999* and *Local Government (Members Allowances and Benefits) Regulations 2015*.

4. Scope & Responsibilities

This Policy applies to all Elected Members, who each have an obligation to abide by its content.

5. Policy Statement

This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- Elected Members should not be significantly out of pocket as a result of performing and discharging their Council functions and duties.
- To assist Elected Members in performing or discharging their official functions and duties they are entitled to be provided with a range of necessary facilities and support and to be reimbursed for expenses as specified in this policy.
- Any reimbursements claimed by Elected Members must be for expenses actually and necessarily incurred in performing and discharging their official Council functions and duties, which will be assessed according to the role of a council member under the LG Act.
- Council encourages continued professional training and development for Elected Members. This is seen as being essential in terms of good governance and to the improved performance of their functions and duties.
- The accountability of the Council to its community for the use of public monies.

6. Allowances

Elected Member allowances are determined by the Remuneration Tribunal on a four (4) yearly basis with each determination required to be made 14 days before the close of nominations for each set of periodic elections held under the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*.

The relevant determination for the Council term commencing in April 2027 will be determined by the Remuneration Tribunal of South Australia and updated in the next iteration of this policy.

The allowance determined by the Remuneration Tribunal will be payable for the period:

- Commencing on the conclusion of the extended 2027 periodic election; and

The annual allowance for an Elected Member is determined according to the relevant Council Group. There are six Council Groups which are each explained within the Determination of the Remuneration Tribunal.

Coorong District Council has been identified as falling within Group 4 in the current Remuneration Tribunal Determination.

The annual allowance for:

- The Mayor is equal to four times the annual allowances for elected members;

- The Deputy Mayor or an elected member who is the presiding member of one or more prescribed committees is equal to one and a quarter (1.25) times the annual allowance for elected members

An additional allowance in the form of a sitting fee is also payable for elected members who are presiding members of other committees (who are not deputy mayors or presiding members of prescribed committees).

Adjustments to Elected Member allowances will be in accordance with the Determination of the Remuneration Tribunal (expected April 2027).

In accordance with regulation 4 of the Allowances Regulation (and for the purposes of section 76 of the Local Government Act), an allowance may be paid in instalments up to three (3) months in advance or three (3) months in arrears of each month in respect of which an instalment is payable.

Council has determined that these allowances be paid monthly in arrears. The first payment of a financial year, however, shall not be paid prior to 1 July in that given year.

An Elected Member who holds office for only a portion of the period when an allowance is payable is entitled to the proportion of the allowance to the total period that office was held.

7. Leave of absence – council member contesting election

If a council member stands as a candidate for election as a member of State Parliament, section 55a of the Local Government Act automatically grants a leave of absence from the date on which nominations for the relevant election close, until the result of the election is publicly declared.

During the leave of absence period, the council member:

- Is not entitled to receive any council member allowance or reimbursement of expenses
- Must not use any facility, service or other form of support provided by Council
- Must not carry out any function or duty as a council member

A maximum penalty of $15,000 applies for a breach of this section of the Local Government Act.

8. Mandatory – Section 77(1)(a) or Prescribed and Approved Reimbursements – Section 77(1)(b)

Elected Members are entitled to receive reimbursement for travelling expenses actually and necessarily incurred by the Elected Member for travel within the Council area and associated with attendance at a ‘prescribed meeting’.

There are additional prescribed expenses incurred by Elected Members which can be approved for reimbursement by the Council but which do not fall within the category of mandatory reimbursement.

9. Mandatory Reimbursements – Child/Dependant care (Section 77(1)(a))

Elected Members are entitled to reimbursement for child/dependant care expenses actually or necessarily incurred by the Elected Member as a consequence of the Elected Member's attendance at a prescribed meeting. Child/dependant care is not reimbursed if the care is provided by a person who ordinarily resides with the Elected Member.

To receive reimbursement for such prescribed expenses (travel and child/dependant care) each Elected Member is required to complete a Form 1 and submit it to Chief Executive Officer. For the purposes of administrative efficiency, Elected Members are requested to submit these forms at least on a quarterly basis.

10. Travel

1. Section 77(1)(a)) - Mandatory Reimbursement

- Reimbursement for travel expenses is restricted to 'eligible journeys' provided the journey is by the shortest or most practicable route and to that part of the journey within the Council area (ie. any travelling outside the Council area in order to attend Council or Council committee meetings is not reimbursable under section 77(1)(a) of the LG Act). For reimbursement for travel outside the Council area refer to "Prescribed and Approved Reimbursements".
- Where an Elected Member travels by private motor vehicle, the rate of reimbursement is at a rate equal to the appropriate rate per kilometre prescribed for the purposes of calculating deductions for car expenses under section 28.25 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 of the Commonwealth.
- Travelling by taxi, bus or other means of public transport is reimbursed on the basis of expenses 'actually and necessarily incurred', but is still limited to 'eligible journeys' by the shortest or most practicable route and to the part of the journey that is within the Council area.

Council may aggregate claims for reimbursement of expenses that relate to journeys that do not exceed 20 kilometres and claim them on a quarterly basis.

2. Section 77(1)(b) – Travel reimbursement (other than under section 77(1)(a))

Council approves reimbursement of the following expenses incurred by Elected Members in travelling to a function or activity on Council business.

The following conditions apply to these expenses:

- Travel both within and outside the Council area must be incurred by the Member as a consequence of attendance at a function or activity on the business of Council.
- Reimbursement is restricted to the shortest or most practicable route and means of transport.
- Where an Elected Member travels by private motor vehicle, the rate of reimbursement is at a rate equal to the appropriate rate per kilometre prescribed for the purposes of calculating deductions for car expenses under section 28.25 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 of the Commonwealth.

- Travel by taxi, bus, plane or other means of public transport will be reimbursed on the basis of expenses where they are incurred as a consequence of the Elected Member's attendance at a function or activity on the business of the Council, however such travel must still be limited to the shortest or most practicable route.
- Car parking fees will be reimbursed where they are a consequence of an Elected Member attending a function or activity on the business of the Council.
- Production of relevant receipts or other evidence of expenditure is required.

3. Use of Council Vehicles

Use of Council provided vehicles for attending a function or activity on the business of Council

Mayoral use: The Mayor will have access to a suitable Council vehicle for attending a function or activity on the business of Council. The Mayor shall arrange with the Chief Executive Officer for the use of the pool car and will be given priority of its use.

Alternatively, where the Mayor travels by private motor vehicle, the rate of reimbursement is at a rate equal to the appropriate rate per kilometre prescribed for the purposes of calculating deductions for car expenses under section 28.25 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 of the Commonwealth.

Reimbursement of these expenses will be based on the cents per kilometre method set by the Australian Taxation Office. A record of kilometres and details will need to be provided to obtain reimbursement.

Elected Members' use: Elected Members may have access to a suitable Council vehicle for attending a function or activity on the business of Council. An Elected Member wishing to use a Council vehicle for attending a function or activity on the business of Council must submit a request to the Chief Executive Officer at least two (2) days prior to use, except in exceptional circumstances as determined between the Elected Member, Mayor and Chief Executive Officer.

Fuel Costs: All fuel used in a Council owned vehicle on attending a function or activity on the business of Council will be provided or paid for by Council.

Motor Vehicle Policy: All Elected Members will abide by the operational Motor Vehicle Policy when utilising a Council pool vehicle.

11. Travel Time Allowance for Members of non-metropolitan councils

Elected Members (excluding the Mayor) are eligible for payment for a travel time payment where the Elected Members:

a) Usual place of residence is within the Coorong District Council and is located **at least 30kms but less than 50kms** from Council's principal office located at Tailem Bend, via the most direct road route - $454 per annum
b) Usual place of residence is within the Coorong District Council and is located **at least 50kms but less than 75kms** from Council's principal office located at Tailem Bend, via the most direct road route - $775 per annum
c) Usual place of residence is within the Coorong District Council area and is located **at least 75kms but less than 100kms** from Council's principal office located at Tailem Bend, via the most direct road route - $1,162 per annum

d) Usual place of residence is within the Coorong District Council area and is located **100kms or more** from Council's principal office located at Tailem Bend, via the most direct road route - $1,649 per annum

This payment is made to an Elected Member in addition to any entitlement to reimbursement of expenses incurred and will be paid quarterly in arrears.

12. Care and other expenses

Pursuant to Section 77(1)(b) of the Act, Council approves reimbursement of:

- Expenses incurred for the care of a child of an Elected Member or dependant of the Elected Member requiring full-time care as a consequence of the Elected Member's attendance at a function or activity on the business of Council (other than expenses reimbursed under section 77 (1)(a) of the LG Act).
- Expenses incurred as a consequence of the Elected Member's attendance at a conference, seminar, training course or other similar activity that is directly or closely related to the performance or discharge of the roles or duties of the Member (other than expenses for which the Member is reimbursed under section 77(1)(a) of the LG Act). Expenses will only be reimbursed for attendance at conferences, seminars, etc. which have been approved by Council through the Council Members' Training & Professional Development Policy.
- The following types of expenses eligible for reimbursement include - airfares, registration fees, accommodation and meals, taxi fares, car parking and other reasonable incidental costs.
- Consideration must be given to all aspects of costs associated when seeking accommodation, for example inclusion of carparking costs etc. and consider accommodation that provides best value for money, safety of Elected Members, availability and comfort.
- Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.
- Incidental costs do not include mini bar and any other costs not deemed best value for money (ie. in-room meals).

All reimbursement claims must be accompanied by a suitably complying tax invoice as acceptable to the Australian Taxation Office and Council's auditors clearly showing expenses incurred.

All reimbursement claims must be made within one (1) month of attending any conference, seminar etc.

13. Facilities & Support

In addition to allowances and the reimbursement of expenses, facilities and forms of support for use by Elected Members to assist them to perform or discharge their official functions and duties (section 78) is provided below:

The provision of facilities and support is available to all Elected Members on a uniform basis, other than those facilities or support specifically provided to the Mayor set out in "Mayor facilities or support".

The following facilities and support are considered necessary or expedient for all Elected Members:

- Appropriate electronic device as approved by Council; (currently laptop and associated accessories)
- Total telephone (fixed and mobile) and office consumable allowance of $500 (one-off payment for term of Council) paid on request by Elected Members. This allowance will apply to the incoming Council at the April 2027 Local Government Election and is made in recognition of any telephone calls, data and/or use of home office consumables for Council business.
- In the event that an Elected Member has received the one-off allowance and a casual vacancy occurs, the remaining value of the allowance will be calculated on a pro-rata basis over the four (4) year period and will be returned by the outgoing Elected Member. This will be implemented through calculations of their final quarterly allowance.
- Council email address
- Data access card
- A level of information technology support to assist Members to use electronic devices in an effective manner
- A reasonable supply of business cards
- Access to meeting rooms as appropriate at any of Council's offices (booking required)
- Meals and refreshments where appropriate while attending Council meetings, Council Committee meetings, Council briefings, workshops, training etc.
- Insurance as required by Section 80 of the Act. This requires that every member of the Council, and a spouse, domestic partner or another person who may be accompanying a member of the Council is insured against risks associated with the performance or discharge of official functions or duties by members

14. Facilities & Support for Mayor

In addition to the above, the Mayor (and any acting Mayor appointed during the Mayor's absence) is entitled to following additional facilities and support to assist them in performing and discharging their official functions and duties:

- Priority use of a Council pool vehicle
- Administrative and diary management support as necessary
- A mobile telephone primarily for Council business. Personal use is permitted that will not result in additional costs to Council

- Subscription costs to relevant bodies that is directly or closely related to the performance or discharge of the roles or duties of the Mayor

The provision of these facilities and support are made available to all Elected Members, including the Mayor on the following basis:

- They are necessary or expedient for the Elected Member to perform or discharge his/her official functions or duties
- The facilities remain the Council's property regardless of whether they are used off site or not
- Each Elected Member is solely responsible for those facilities released into their care and/or control for the duration of their term in office
- Each Elected Member is solely responsible for the maintaining of confidential items/matters that may be stored on any information technology device, mobile phone and/or documentation
- They are not to be used for a private purpose or any other purpose unrelated to official Council functions and duties, unless such usage has been specifically pre-approved by the Council and the council member has agreed to reimburse the Council for any additional cost or expenses associated with that usage
- They are not to be used by any other person
- All facilities must be returned to the Council at the end of each term in office, upon a vacancy of office or earlier at the request of the Chief Executive Officer
- If the facilities provided are damaged or lost, the Elected Member must lodge a written report with the Chief Executive Officer

15. Other Reimbursements

Any additional reimbursements and facilities and support not detailed in this Policy will require the specific approval of Council prior to any reimbursements being paid, benefits being received and facilities and/or support being provided.

16. Claims for Reimbursement

Elected Members are required to provide details of kilometres travelled and/or evidence of expenses incurred to support all reimbursements claimed.

All claims for reimbursement must be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer on the appropriate Elected Members Reimbursement Claim Form on a quarterly basis for the purposes of maintaining the Register of Allowances Benefits.

Reimbursement of expenses will only be paid upon presentation of the form/s and adequate evidence (ie. tax invoices acceptable to the Australian Tax Office and Council Auditors supporting the claims made and must be provided quarterly).

17. Register of Allowances and Benefits

Pursuant to Section 79(1) and (2) of the LG Act, the Chief Executive Officer must maintain a Register in which he or she shall ensure that a record is kept of the following and updated on a quarterly basis:

- The annual allowance paid or payable to each Elected Member under Section 79(1)(a) of the Act;
- Any expenses reimbursed under section 77(1)(b) of the LG Act (in the case of section 79(1)(b));
- Details of other benefits paid or payable to, or provided for the benefit of the Member by the Council (in the case of section 79(1)(c)); or
- To make a record of the provision of a reimbursement (other than a reimbursement under section 77(1)(a) or benefit not previously recorded in the Register (in the case of section 79(2)(b)),

Reimbursements paid under Section 77(1)(a) of the Act are not required to be recorded in the Register.

Any changes in the allowance or a benefit payable to, or provided for the benefit of, Elected Members will be updated in the Register each quarter and therefore each Elected Member is required to provide his or her claim form for reimbursement to the Chief Executive Officer on a quarterly basis.

The Register of Allowances and Benefits is available on Council's website at any time, or for inspection by members of the public free of charge, at Council's Offices during ordinary business hours of each office. Copies or extracts of the Register are available for purchase upon payment of a fee payable as per the Fees & Charges schedule.

18. Breach of Policy

Any breach of this Policy will be managed in accordance with the Behavioural Management Policy – Council Members.

19. Document History

This policy, in its entirety will automatically lapse at the next general election. The policy will be reviewed after the next general election, as required, or due to any legislative changes.

Version	Adopted	Minute No	Description of change(s)
1	20 September 2011	279/11	New policy
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Various	324/12 409/13 256/14 038/15 175/16 161/17 244/18 070/20	Cyclical reviews
10	18 January 2022	004/22	Cyclical review Minor formatting Inclusion of new clause regarding allowances for leave of absence when a council member contests the State Election Reimbursement claim forms (1 and 2) reformatted and included as appendices
11	19 April 2022	079/22	Expansion of definition of 'dependant' Section 12 – 'Facilities & Support' – telephone and office consumables allowance amended for the 2018 – 2022 and 2022 – 2026 terms of Council
12	29 November 2022	244/22	Cyclical review Correction of 'Principal Member' terminology to 'Mayor' (to align with commencement of popularly-elected mayor at the 2022 Local Government Elections). Section 6 – 'Allowances' – updated to include references to Remuneration Tribunal grouping and CPI indexation adjustments. Section 7 – information included under this section appeared in

			previous version, now it appears separately. Section 13 – 'Facilities & Support' – telephone and office consumables allowance applicable to former Council (2018 – 2022) removed.
13	24 January 2023	012/23	Section 11 – Travel Time Allowance for Members of Non-Metropolitan Councils updated in accordance with Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2 of 2022 – Members of Local Government
14	18 August 2026	243/26	Clause 6 updated to reflect payment of allowances now taking place monthly in arrears (minute 221/26) Former references to *Council Members* changed to *Elected Members* throughout, given this is Council's preferred terminology when referring to the group of elected officials (except when quoting/referring to legislation, where statewide use of the term *'council members'* is industry-standard). This includes renaming the title of the policy to reflect same. Minor amendments to clause 6 pertaining to the 2022 determination of allowances (keeping in mind extension of current term until April 2027 and full review of policy thereafter)

Appendix 1 – Council Members Reimbursement Claim Form – MANDATORY (Form #1)

Elected Members Reimbursement Claim Form – MANDATORY
Form #1

Elected Member details				
Name				
Period claimed	☐ 1 January – 31 March		☐ 1 April – 30 June	
	☐ 1 July – 30 September		☐ 1 October – 31 December	
Calendar year	☐ 2026	☐ 2027	☐ 2028	☐ 2029

Reimbursement sought

Pursuant to section 77(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1999 and regulation 5 of the Local Government (Members Allowances and Benefits) Regulations 2025, I am seeking reimbursement of prescribed expenses associated with attending the following prescribed meeting(s)/event(s) that is not subject to Council approval:

- ☐ Ordinary Council meeting
- ☐ Special Council meeting
- ☐ Informal gathering
- ☐ Elected Members workshop
- ☐ Section 41 committee meeting (as the elected Council representative)
- ☐ Training course (attendance approved by Council)

Travel expenses and travel time

Date of travel	Council function or business attended (incl. location)	Mode of transport	Distance travelled (kms)
		Total kilometres	
		Mileage rate	$0.88 per kilometre
		TOTAL	**$**

Third party transport details (ie. bus/taxi)			
Amount claimed	$		*Please attach all receipts*

Care expenses
(an Elected Member is not entitled to be reimbursed if the care is provided by a person who ordinarily resides with the member)

Name of child/dependant	Date of care	Prescribed meeting/event attended	Hours of care provided	Care provider

Please attach all receipts

Declaration

I confirm that the above claims for reimbursement are true and accurate and are made in accordance with section 77(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1999 and regulation 5 of the Local Government (Members Allowances and Benefits) Regulations 2025.

Signature		Date	

Please forward completed claim form to council@coorong.sa.gov.au

Office use only			
Executive Officer			
Claims verified against corporate calendar	☐ Yes ☐ No	Initials	Date
Accounts payable voucher raised	☐ Yes ☐ No		
Total reimbursement claimed	$		
Finance Officer – Creditors			
Claim figures reviewed and confirmed	☐ Yes ☐ No	Initials	Date

Appendix 2 – Council Members Reimbursement Claim Form – APPROVED (Form #2)

Elected Members Reimbursement Claim Form – APPROVED
Form #2

Elected Member details				
Name				
Period claimed	☐ 1 January – 31 March		☐ 1 April – 30 June	
	☐ 1 July – 30 September		☐ 1 October – 31 December	
Calendar year	☐ 2026	☐ 2027	☐ 2028	☐ 2029

Reimbursement sought

Pursuant to section 77(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1999 and regulation 5 of the Local Government (Members Allowances and Benefits) Regulations 2025, I am seeking reimbursement of prescribed expenses associated with attending the following prescribed meeting(s)/event(s) that is not subject to Council approval:

☐ Section 41 committee meeting
(not in capacity as elected Council representative)

☐ Regional meeting
(ie. MRLGA, Local Health Network)

☐ Community group committee meeting
(as the elected Council representative)

☐ Guest of another council
(ie. mayoral reception/facility opening)

☐ State, National or culturally significant event
(ie. ANZAC/Remembrance Day, NAIDOC Week)

☐ Local Government Association meeting
(attendance approved by Council)

☐ Other
(please list) _____

Travel expenses and travel time

Date of travel	Council function or business attended (incl. location)	Mode of transport	Distance travelled (kms)
		Total kilometres	
		Mileage rate	$0.88 per kilometre
		TOTAL	$

Third party transport details (ie. bus/taxi)			
Amount claimed	$		*Please attach all receipts*

Care expenses
(an Elected Member is not entitled to be reimbursed if the care is provided by a person who ordinarily resides with the member)

Name of child/dependant	Date of care	Prescribed meeting/event attended	Hours of care provided	Care provider

Please attach all receipts

Other reimbursement sought	
Date	Reimbursement description

Please attach all receipts

Declaration

I confirm that the above claims for reimbursement are true and accurate and are made in accordance with section 77(1)(b) of the Local Government Act 1999 and regulation 5 of the Local Government (Members Allowances and Benefits) Regulations 2025.

Signature		Date	

Please forward completed claim form to council@coorong.sa.gov.au

Office use only			
Executive Officer			
Claims verified against corporate calendar	☐ Yes ☐ No	Initials	Date
Accounts payable voucher raised	☐ Yes ☐ No		
Total reimbursement claimed	$		
Finance Officer – Creditors			
Claim figures reviewed and confirmed	☐ Yes ☐ No	Initials	Date