

# CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE AND TRAVEL BY COUNCILLORS

## 1. PURPOSE

- To clarify the approval process for overseas and interstate travel by Councillors in an official capacity.
- To outline the process for reimbursement of expenses associated with such travel.
- To ensure the statutory *Register of Overseas or Interstate Travel* is maintained in accordance with Regulation 11c of the Local Government Regulations 2004.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

- To define the procedure to be followed when approval to travel is sought.
- To define the process and prescribe the application form for reimbursement of expenses incurred during travel undertaken in capacity of Councillor.
- To specify a post-travel reporting procedure for Councillors who have travelled overseas or interstate wholly or partially funded by Council.
- To ensure statutory requirements are met regarding entries in the *Register of Overseas or Interstate Travel*.
- To meet Council Plan objectives.

## 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Councillors of the City Of Whitehorse.

## 4. DEFINITIONS

Statutory Reference: Local Government Regulations 2004

*Part 5– Information to be made available to the public*

*Regulation 11. (c) ‘A Council must make available for public inspection details of overseas or interstate travel, (with the exception of interstate travel by land for less than 3 days) undertaken in an official capacity by Councillors or any member of Council staff in the previous 12 months, including the names of the Councillors or members of Council staff and the date, destination, purpose and total cost of the overseas or interstate travel;’*

Note 1: The Whitehorse City Council has established for the purpose of capturing such details a ‘*Register of Overseas and Interstate Travel*’ held in the Civic Services Department to ensure such details are always available for public inspection.

Note 2: Travel must be entered in the register if taken by a person ‘in an official capacity’ which includes travel undertaken because of the position they hold, whether or not the Council pays for any of the trip. It is on the basis of travel undertaken, not who paid the expenditure.

‘Official capacity’ means the position held by a person in relation to the Whitehorse City Council. This covers an elected Councillor for the purpose of this Policy. It includes attendance at conferences and seminars, either as a participant or speaker.

‘Interstate Travel’ for the purpose of this policy means travel outside Victoria and within Australia.

## **5. POLICY**

Council recognises that attendance at conferences/seminars/study tours contributes to the personal and professional development of Council and is consistent with Council's objectives.

Registration fees, accommodation, travelling expenses and other out of pocket expenses shall be borne by Council in accordance with clause 16 of this Policy. The amount payable by Council for travel by air shall be the equivalent of a return economy class airfare. Reimbursement of all expenses is based on the principle of cost neutrality to the participant.

The amount available to individual Councillors for conference/seminar attendance shall be in accordance with the amount allocated specifically for this purpose in Council's annual budget.

All overseas travel shall be authorised in advance by Council. All interstate travel shall be authorised in advance by the Mayor.

Council in its annual budget will allocate a specified sum per Councillor for the purpose of conference seminar/attendance travel and associated expenses and training under the Council Expenses Program. Expenditure in excess of the allocated sum for each Councillor will require Council approval prior to expenditure occurring.

Individual Councillor expenses accounts shall be maintained for the purposes of this policy.

In instances where a Councillor's spouse or another family member travels with the Councillor, they shall meet the full cost incurred. These costs must be paid in full to Council at the time of conference registration and prior to travel being undertaken. Any additional costs incurred by the Councillor's spouse/family member shall be reimbursed to Council within 14 days of return from travel.

Any Councillor who is offered sponsorship in the form of conference registration or other costs in an official capacity, wholly or partly by any government agency, external organisation or person, shall immediately make this known to the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer.

A written report shall be prepared for the information of Council by every Councillor, (subject to the exception below) who has travelled overseas or interstate in an official capacity. The report shall provide comment on the value of the conference/visit, benefits to the city and provide recommendations for further action (if applicable). This report will be circulated to Councillors via the Councillor Portal. In the event that two or more Councillors attend the same conference, for the purposes of this policy, only one written report is required which may be a joint report.

## **6. PROCEDURE**

### Approvals for travel undertaken in an official capacity

A 'Request for Travel' must be submitted on the prescribed form (Attachment 1) and submitted for approval in accordance with this policy. To meet Council's statutory obligations a copy of the form is to be forwarded to the Manager Civic Services for inclusion in the *Register of Overseas and Interstate Travel*.

All arrangements for Councillors will be handled by the EA to Mayor and Councillors. EA to Mayor and Councillors is NOT responsible for handling travel arrangements for accompanying spouse/family members.

## **7. PAST CONFERENCE/SEMINAR ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Written reports as required under Clause 20 will be issued within two months of the date of return from such conference/seminar attendance.

To ensure that the Council Administration consider and follow up on actions/initiatives and recommendations from the reports of Councillors attending conferences, Manager Civic Services will review the reports and list matters requiring attention before the Executive Management Team. The Executive Management Team will decide the appropriate action and allocate action officers. All Councillors will be advised of the progress of these items.

#### **8. EXPENDITURE**

Details of expenditure for ALL overseas and interstate travel shall be provided by every Councillor in the prescribed form – ‘Report on Expenditure for Travel’ (Attachment 2). The form is to be submitted to the Mayor within 14 days of return from the travel. Following approval by the Mayor, the form will be forwarded to the Finance Department for relevant action and a copy provided to Manager Civic Services for inclusion in the *Register of Overseas and Interstate Travel*.

#### **9. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Individual Councillors for document completion

Manager Finance for reimbursement of expenses

Manager Civic Services for maintenance of *Register of Overseas and Interstate Travel*

#### **10. APPENDICES**

Attachment 1 – Councillor Request for Travel Form

Attachment 2 – Report of Expenditure for Travel – Councillors

Attachment 1

**CITY OF WHITEHORSE  
COUNCILLOR REQUEST FOR TRAVEL (Interstate or Overseas)**

This form is to be submitted to the MAYOR for signature BEFORE you make any arrangements, ie conference bookings, air fares etc via the EA to the Mayor and Councillors, purchase order or any other method.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

request permission to travel to \_\_\_\_\_  
(state destination and if flying or driving there)

for the purpose of attending \_\_\_\_\_  
(describe conference)

The benefit to Whitehorse of this travel is:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** if somebody else is also attending, they need to do a separate form, keeping all travel costs separated.

I would like to depart on \_\_\_\_\_ and return on \_\_\_\_\_

Expenses to be paid from account \_\_\_\_\_

**My proposed air fares, travel costs and registrations are:**

(detail here flight times, dates, how many nights accommodation etc and any comments you wish to make)

**Request for Travel is Part 1 of the process.**

**Within 14 days of completion of travel you must complete a Report of Expenditure Form (Part 2 of the process). Report of Expenditure Form is required to register your trip and is separate to any reimbursements you are claiming.**

It is a statutory requirement under the Local Government (General Regulations) 2004, for Council to maintain a Register of Interstate and Overseas Travel and to make this Register available for public inspection for a period of 12 months.

During your trip, if you use your personal credit card or CabCharge, please make a note of costs so you can finish this form without waiting for a monthly statement.

**SIGNATURE**

\_\_\_\_\_

**MAYOR'S APPROVAL**

\_\_\_\_\_

FOR COUNCILLORS' INTERSTATE TRAVEL, MAYOR'S APPROVAL IS REQUIRED; FOR COUNCILLORS' OVERSEAS TRAVEL, APPROVAL OF COUNCIL IS REQUIRED.

After approval, **you** are required to provide a copy to Manager Civic Services.

**PLEASE REFER TO CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE AND TRAVEL POLICY BEFORE SUBMITTING THIS FORM**

**Attachment 2**

**CITY OF WHITEHORSE  
REPORT OF EXPENDITURE FOR TRAVEL - COUNCILLORS**  
(To be completed within 14 days of return from the trip)

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**TITLE**                      **COUNCILLOR**

**Please note: This form is for the purpose of entering the travel in the register required by the Local Government Act which is a separate purpose from any reimbursement claims. On completion of the form, you must submit a copy to Manager Civic Services after MAYOR has signed it.**

**Date and Purpose of Trip (include the dates and place of the conference)**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

<b>EXPENDITURE DETAIL</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>* Method of Payment</b>	<b>Account No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Airfares				
Accommodation				
No. of nights:				
Conference Costs				
Meals				
Taxis				
Hire Car				
Other (Pls specify)				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>			

*\*Prearranged, credit card, cash etc*

**I confirm this is a true and accurate record of my travel expenditure and reimbursements sought whilst attending an interstate/overseas conference in accordance with Council Policy, and does not include any claims for reimbursements of a personal or private nature.**

**SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_

**MAYOR'S APPROVAL** \_\_\_\_\_

**COPIES TO BE PROVIDED BY COUNCILLOR TO CIVIC SERVICES**

File No: 55/04/013 & \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in Register: \_\_\_\_\_