

Council Member Allowances and Support **POLICY EM05**



Name	EM05 Council Member Allowances and Support
Policy Type	Council
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
Approval Date	20/06/2023
Review Date	19/06/2027

1. Purpose

Litchfield Council is committed to ensuring Council Members are provided with the support necessary for them to effectively carry out their roles in Council. Pursuant to *Determination No.1 of 2023 – Allowances for Members of Local Government Councils* (Determination) and section 106 of the *Local Government Act 2019*, this policy clarifies the allowances and expenses to be paid to Council Members.

2. Scope

This policy applies to Council Members.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

Allowances	Allowances provided in compensation to Council Members in consideration of the time and effort spent in their roles on Council.
Council Member	Individuals elected to Council. For the purposes of this policy, Council Member refers to Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor.

4. Policy Statement

4.1. Council Member Allowances

- 4.1.1. As per the Determination, an allowance is paid to Council Members.
- 4.1.2. An additional allowance is paid to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
- 4.1.3. The allowances cover the following;
 - Any cost to Council Members of attending ordinary Council meetings;
 - Contribution towards phone and internet usage;
 - Contribution towards any home office and supplies; and
 - Costs incurred in servicing constituents (for example; donations, membership fees, constituent support).

4.2. Professional Development Allowance

- 4.2.1. A professional development allowance is available for each Council Member as per the Determination. Any course or professional development activity must be specifically related to the role of the Council Member and be approved by the Council.
- 4.2.2. The professional development allowances may be claimed multiple times each year, but the total of those claims must not exceed the amount specified in the Determination.
- 4.2.3. The professional development allowance can be used to cover the cost of travel to the course/conference, course/conference fees, meals and accommodation for the duration of the course/conference.
- 4.2.4. The professional development allowance for the costs (including travel, accommodation and meals) in attending any training, mediation or counselling recommended by the council, a council panel, prescribed corporation panel or as ordered by NTCAT as a result of a complaint of a contravention of the code of conduct.
- 4.2.5. Claims must be made using approved forms.
- 4.2.6. Only approved course/conferences that are in line with council policy attract professional development allowances (payable for each day of attendance).
- 4.2.7. Membership fees for bodies considered directly beneficial to the role of a Council Member (ie Australian Institute of Company Directors) may be claimed.
- 4.2.8. Allowances will not be paid in advance except for course fees, conference registration costs, travel and accommodation which will be paid for by the Council to the provider of the relevant service in advance of attendance at the approved activity.

4.3. Extra Meeting allowance

- 4.3.1.1. For a principal member and acting principal member, this allowance is not paid separately. It is provided for and included in the their allowance.
- 4.3.1.2. For other Council Members, including deputy mayor, this allowance is paid only after an approved claim has been made within 90 days of the extra meeting.
- 4.3.1.3. The amount of the extra meeting allowance is as per the Determination.
- 4.3.1.4. In accordance with the Determination, only the following meetings will attract the allowance:
 - Council Committee Meetings;
 - Special Meetings of Council;
 - Special Meetings of Council Committees;
 - Council Advisory / Reference Group Meetings;
 - Council workshops or briefings; and
 - Meetings of external agencies or organisations to which Council has formally appointed a Council Member to represent the Council or a member nominated through or with the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory as a representative.

4.4. Payment of Allowances

- 4.4.1. Allowances (apart from Professional Development Allowance) are to be paid from 1 July each year on a monthly basis in arrears on the second Thursday of the month by electronic funds transfer to Council Member nominated account.
- 4.4.2. Where an Council Member is acting as Mayor in the absence of the Mayor for a period of less than 7 days, no compensation will be paid. Where the period is 7 days or longer, the acting Mayor will be paid 100% of the Mayoral Base Allowance instead of their normal base allowance for that period.

4.5. Council Member Benefits

- 4.5.1. In order to ensure Council Members are able to have ready access to technology enabling them to perform their roles as efficiently as possible, they are provided with:
 - A laptop;
 - A Litchfield Council email address for official use in their role as Council Member, together with calendar facility. A Council Member's calendar shall be available to other Council Members and nominated staff (as appointed by the CEO) in order to facilitate the smooth running of Council operations, and as a record of their activities.
- 4.5.2. All ICT equipment remains the property of Litchfield Council. Council Members have full private use. Support provided by Council will be on a "return to Council" basis, with Council IT support staff not being responsible to attend private residences.
- 4.5.3. Council Members shall be provisioned with business cards and name badges for their use.
- 4.5.4. Council will provide postage for official correspondence through its internal mail services. Bulk mailing will not be provided.
- 4.5.5. Use of Council's photocopying facilities for official business is available for Council Members through prior notice to the Executive Assistant to the Mayor and CEO. Circulars, publications or election material are specifically excluded from this benefit.
- 4.5.6. Council Members will be reimbursed for attendance at all Council endorsed meetings to a maximum of \$85 to cover child care costs associated with their participation. Reimbursement is subject to receipts being provided and are on a per Member rather than per child basis.
- 4.5.7. For any Council Member with a disability, Council may resolve to provide reasonable additional facilities and expenses in order to allow that Member to perform their civic duties.
- 4.5.8. Council members shall not use Council facilities, resources (including staff) for personal reasons including furtherance of their political career.
- 4.5.9. Council Members are not provided with stationary, mobile phones, uniforms or any other materials not provided for within this Policy. These can be purchased at the discretion of Council Members themselves.

4.6. Miscellaneous

- 4.6.1. A framed Certificate of Service will be presented in Council meeting for Council Members achieving 10 years of service, with subsequent certificates presented at five yearly intervals.
- 4.6.2. A history of members elected to office will be appropriately recorded photographically under direction of the CEO.

4.7. Mayoral Benefits

- 4.7.1. In addition to the benefits above, the Mayor is entitled to the following additional benefits to assist them in their civic duties:
 - A mobile phone;
 - An office and administrative and secretarial assistance for official use only;
 - A fully maintained Council vehicle with private use limited to within the Northern Territory only and a purchase price in accordance with INF09 Fleet Policy.

4.8. Council Member Travel

- 4.8.1. Council Members are entitled to travel allowance when required to stay away from home overnight on approved Council business as per the Determination.
- 4.8.2. Council Members wishing to attend a conference, workshop, seminar or relevant training session incurring travel costs at Council's expense shall apply to the CEO for approval.
- 4.8.3. Air travel is to be by the most reasonably economic means available, and shall not include business or first class.
- 4.8.4. Accommodation, meals and associated travel costs are to be covered by prior approval of the CEO.
- 4.8.5. Council will pay in advance any registration fees, accommodation deposits and airline tickets for approved Council Member travel. Where this is not possible, a reimbursement equivalent to the fees or expenses will be paid subject to the provision of receipts.
- 4.8.6. Council Members may be accompanied by a spouse or partner subject to Council not incurring any additional expense.

4.9. Vehicle Allowance

- 4.9.1. Vehicle allowance is available for travel undertaken by all Council Members in excess of 50kms from home base, as per the Determination.

4.10. Insurance

4.10.1. Council Members will receive the benefit of insurance cover to the limit specified in Council's insurance policies for the following:

- I. Personal Injury whilst on Council business, providing specified benefits for lost income and other expenses arising from permanent disablement, temporary total disability and temporary partial disability. The cover does not include medical expenses. Full details are available from the CEO.
- II. Use of private motor vehicle whilst on Council business.
- III. Public Liability (personal injury, damage to property and products liability) and Professional Indemnity, happening during the period of protection caused by an occurrence in connection with the business of Council.
- IV. Management Liability, provides protection including defence costs to Elected Members for claims alleging wrongful act/(s) for which the person is not indemnified by Council.

5. Associated Documents

EM01 Elected Member Code of Conduct

6. References and Legislation

Northern Territory Local Government Act 2019, Regulations, Ministerial Guidelines and General Instructions, Determinations and Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act 2006

7. Review History

Date Reviewed	Description of changes (Inc Decision No. if applicable)
14/12/2015	Policy adopted
15/2/2017	Updated with professional development allowance, LC27 rescinded as a duplicate
15/11/2017	Remove internet allowance and Elected Member (1718/099)
18/07/2018	Include professional development in list for extra meeting allowance, remove gifts and benefits section as covered with EM07
21/10/2020	Professional development allowance amended to include memberships (2021-059)
21/07/2021	Amendments in accordance with Local Government Act 2019 and Regulations
18/01/2022	Mayoral vehicle benefits amended in accordance with INF09 Fleet Policy. Policy Review date to remain as 21/07/2025

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Date Reviewed	Description of changes (Inc Decision No. if applicable)
21/06/2022	Amendment to remove specific amount from policy and include reference to new legislation. Review date changed to 2026.
20/06/2023	Amendments in accordance with <i>Determination No.1 of 2023 – Allowances for Members of Local Government Councils</i> as well as other admin changes.