

CL006 - Elected Member Administration Policy

1. POLICY CERTIFICATION

Policy title:	Elected Member Administration Policy
Policy number:	CL006
Category:	Policy
Classification:	Elected Members
Status:	Approved

2. PURPOSE

This policy outlines the administrative arrangements applicable to Elected Members including allowances, benefits, development and administrative support.

3. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This policy applies to all Elected Council Members of the Roper Gulf Regional Council (Council).

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Council will provide its Elected Members with Base Allowances, Electoral Allowances, Professional Development Allowances, Extra Meetings Allowances and Acting Principal Member Allowances as prescribed by applicable law.

Elected Council members shall be provided with the appropriate administrative support so as to enable the efficient function of their Office.

Elected Members shall be reimbursed 'out of pocket expenses' (incidental expenses) which are related to their Office but for whatever reason, were not covered by their allowances, if they obtain prior approval from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Council will provide all allowances in a manner that adheres to the *Local Government Act 2019* and its statutory instruments.

5. DEFINITIONS

The Act	<i>Local Government Act 2019.</i>
Adheres	Follows or 'sticks to'.
Authorising Manager	For the purposes of this Policy the authorising Manager is the Manager responsible for the administration of Council and Governance functions. The authorising Manager is a function, not a position title, and outlined in the Organisational Structure.
Allowance	For the purposes of this Policy, an allowance is a benefit, financial, material, or otherwise, payable and/or provided to an Elected Member in accordance with an Act or Statutory Instrument.
Tablet	Electronic tablet device which allows Elected members to access the internet and their emails remotely.
Travel	For the purposes of this Policy travel is an formal, authorised activity undertaken by an Elected Member in their official capacity, that is not located at their community / township of residence, and that requires temporary physical relocation from the Elected Member's community / township to the location of the authorised activity so as to enable the Elected Member to undertake the authorised activity.
Elected Members	Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillors, elected to the Roper Gulf Regional Council.
Incidental Expenses	The expenses that occur that are essential to the completion of the Roper Gulf Regional Council task at hand. For example fuel expenses to travel to the

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	task/event.
Shall	Will .
Arrears	That which is behind in payments.
Claimable	A payment demanded in accordance with a policy, for if the elected member is eligible.
Nominated	Chosen.
Room Charges	Any additional charges or amounts credited back to a hotel room whilst staying in that hotel room.

6. PRINCIPLES

6.1 Ordinary Allowance

The base allowance covers those activities required of an Elected Member in the performance of his or her role as an Elected Member including agenda study and meeting preparation; attendance at regular council meetings; attendance at social functions as a council representative; constituency responsibilities; council representation within the council area unless the representation has extra meeting approval.

The base allowance is automatically paid to Elected Members each month or at such frequency resolved by Council, in arrears. This payment, once approved by the authorising Manager, will be processed by Finance on the first of each month and deposited in the Elected Member’s nominated bank account. If the first of the month falls on the weekend or public holiday, the allowance will be processed on the next working day.

Elected Member allowance rates are set annually by the Remuneration Tribunal.

6.2 Electoral Allowance

The electoral allowance is to assist Elected Members with electoral matters. The electoral allowance is automatically paid to Elected Members each month or at such a frequency resolved by Council, in arrears. This payment, once approved by the authorising Manager, will be processed by Finance on the first of each month and deposited in the Elected Member’s nominated bank account. If the first of the month falls on the weekend or public holiday, the allowance will be processed on the next working day.

6.3 Extra Meeting Allowance

The extra meeting allowance is a capped sum of money provided when an Elected Member attends an extra meeting or event deemed to be above the normal meetings as set out by the Council. The extra meeting allowance is claimable by the Elected Member for each day of the event or extra meeting. The payment of this allowance will be in arrears. The eligibility for Extra Meeting Allowance shall meet the following criteria:

- 1) The meeting must be outside of the Elected Members primary Town/Community of residency;
- 2) Any meeting for which the Mayor or CEO makes a request for Council representation. These meetings may include and are not limited to:
 - i. formal invitation to Councillors to a meeting/s with Territory and Commonwealth Ministers or Departments;
 - ii. formal invitation to relevant stakeholders;
- 3) Any formal Council Committee Meeting;
- 4) The Principal Member, Deputy Principal Member, or an Acting Principal Member are ineligible for extra meeting allowances.

Extra Meeting Allowance will not be paid if the claim is for:

- 1) an Ordinary Meeting of Council;

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- 2) a Special Meeting of Council;
- 3) any meeting inside an Elected Member's town/community of residence;
- 4) any engagement for which the Base Allowance is applicable.

An Elected Member may claim the extra meeting allowance:

- a. Up to a maximum of two (2) meetings per day;
- b. If the Elected Member is required to travel for the extra meeting, the Elected Member may receive Travel Allowance, as well as the extra meeting allowance for the days of travel as well as for the meeting day itself.

An Elected Member shall not claim:

- a. More than once for each meeting;
If the travel day falls on the same day as the meeting day, extra meeting travel may not be claimed.

6.4 Acting Principal Allowance

The acting principal allowance is a sum of money provided to the Deputy Principal or Elected Member when they are carrying out the duties of the Principal Member due to the Principal Members absence or inability to carry-out duties due to other arrangements. The Acting Principal Allowance is a claimable sum of money that is paid on a monthly basis. The Deputy Principal or Elected Member is entitled to claim for this allowance:

- a. If the duties of the Principal Member, as outlined in Part 4.2 of *Local Government Act 2019* have been carried out by themselves.
- b. If the duties have been carried out for up to and no more than 90 days in total in a financial year. Should the duties continue for longer than 90 days as resolved by Council, the rate reverts to usual rate for that Member.

During the time the member is acting as principal:

- a. The Elected Member, including the Deputy Principal is to be paid the daily rate as detailed in the Expenses table. This daily rate includes Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays.
- b. The extra meeting and base allowances will be suspended
- c. The Elected Member will continue to receive their electoral allowance.

6.5 Allowances for which no Financial Advantage is gained

Council shall ensure that Elected Members shall not be at a financial disadvantage, nor gain financial advantage for professional development or travel, the allowances for which are outlined below:

N.b. any expenses incurred for official purposes must be formally demonstrated by way of a receipt if it is to be claimed as a reimbursement.

6.5.1 Professional Development Allowance

The professional development allowance is payable to Elected Members to attend relevant and Council approved conferences or training courses. Professional development allowance is to be used to cover the cost of the registration or entry fee into the conference or course, travel, meals and accommodation.

The professional development allowance is claimable and available:

1. To all Elected Members.
2. Multiple times each year but shall not exceed the maximum amount specified by the Remuneration Tribunal.
3. Only when participating in approved courses and conferences consistent with Council policy.

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Alternatively, when Council has recommended and organised attendance at a conference and/or training session, Council will pre-pay any and all costs of relevant conferences or training courses, travel, accommodation, and travel allowance. If Council has paid the professional development costs directly, no professional development allowance is to be paid directly to the Elected Member.

6.5.2 Travel Allowance

Travel allowance is the sum of money provided when Elected Members are undertaking work related travel that requires an overnight stay in a location other than their primary residence. Travel allowance comprises components for accommodation, meals and other incidental expenses based on rates determined by the Australian Taxation Office recommendations or at an appropriate, Council-approved rate. It is a sum of money paid to the Elected Member, prior to their travel to cover all travel costs in the route and mode of transport that is most economical to Roper Gulf Regional Council. Travel Allowance forms are to be completed for each claim to be processed.

The travel allowance is claimable by the Elected Member and must be pre-approved by the authorising Manager before the travel has been undertaken. When an Elected Member is required to travel for work related purposes, the Governance Officer for Council will submit a 'Travel Allowance Form' to the authorising Manager on the Elected Member's behalf for approval of payment. Once approved, the payment will be made into the Elected Member's nominated bank account in the earliest pay run from submission of the Travel Allowance Form. Should the Elected Member wish to receive their Travel Allowance as a cash payment, they must advise the Governance Officer for Council a minimum one (1) week prior to the first day of travel.

The claim conditions in which one can apply for the components of travel allowance are as follows:

Incidentals:

1. A set amount per day.
2. Shall only be claimed after the first 24 hours of travel away from primary place of work/residence or cannot be claimed during the first 24 hours of travel.
3. Shall only be claimed in compliance with applicable Council policy and/or policy support document

Breakfast:

1. A set amount per meal. Any breakfast expenses over the set breakfast allowance amount will be at the Elected Member's own expense.
2. Shall only be claimed in compliance with applicable Council policy and/or policy support document.
3. Shall only be claimed if Roper Gulf Regional Council have not pre-paid or ordered catering or not supplied by the event attending from 0600hrs to 0900hrs for this meal.

Lunch:

1. A set amount per meal. Any lunch expenses over the set lunch allowance amount will be at the Elected Member's own expense.
2. Shall only be claimed in compliance with applicable Council policy and/or policy support document.
3. Shall only be claimed if Roper Gulf Regional Council have not pre-paid or ordered catering or not supplied by the event attending from 1200hrs to 1500hrs for this meal.

Dinner:

1. A set amount per meal. Any dinner expenses over the set dinner allowance amount will be at the Elected Member's own expense.
2. Shall only be claimed in compliance with applicable Council policy and/or policy support document..

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3. Shall only be claimed if Roper Gulf Regional Council have not pre-paid or ordered catering or not supplied by the event attending from 1900hrs to 2359hrs for this meal.

Accommodation:

1. Shall only be claimed if Roper Gulf Regional Council is not paying for the accommodation by submitting the applicable Council Reimbursement Claim Form.
2. Will only cover the most basic room rate available. Any upgrades of room type or room charges will be paid by the Elected Member at their own expense.

Mileage:

1. A set amount per kilometre.
2. Shall only be paid if travel is conducted in a personal vehicle that has been pre-approved. Pre-approval of a vehicle can be obtained by providing the Governance Officer for Council with the vehicle's current registration and insurance documentation.
3. Shall only be paid for travel from the Elected Member's primary place of residence to the destination in which Roper Gulf Regional Council requires them and return, with both journeys undertaken by the shortest practicable route.
4. Shall only be paid once, per vehicle per trip, to the owner/operator of the vehicle being used for the trip. It does not apply to other Elected Members who are vehicle-sharing as passengers.

6.6 Annual Resolution of Allowances

The amount of Council Member Allowances including the amount of the Extra Meeting Allowance is determined by Council resolution every year as per legislative requirements. The resolution of Council Member Allowances for the financial year **must be made when it adopts the budget** for the financial year in accordance with *Local Government Act 2019*. The maximum amounts payable are in the Local Government Guideline 2A Maximum Council Member Allowances schedule.

6.7 Individual Responsibility of Elected Members

Council acknowledges its due diligence obligations pertaining to the expenditure of its funds, and affirms its commitment to holding its Elected Members accountable for any costs it incurs arising out of its Elected Members' activities. Further on to the provisions of Clause 6.5, Council requires its Elected Members to reimburse it for any costs it incurs arising out of an Elected Member's failure to attend a prescribed activity without a lawful, and reasonable excuse, including travel costs, activity costs, and accommodation costs. Such costs are generally recovered by way of deduction from an Elected Member's monthly allowance, however Council may undertake other steps to ensure its costs are recovered in full.

6.8 Further Administrative Support

Council will provide Elected Members with administrative support including access to its offices, an official email account, and a 'smart' mobile telephone with credit and data allowances for official purposes. Elected Members are bound by all Council policy and requirements pertaining to Information Telecommunications Technology (ICT) use, and are expected to take care of any issues assets.

Elected Members have limited private use of their Council issues mobile telephones provided that such use does not interfere with, or otherwise compromise official purposes. This is inclusive of any mobile data allowances associated with ICT assets.

The Mayor shall be provided with an appropriate motor vehicle with private use that is to be administered by way of a specific, termed agreement with Council.

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6.9 Training and Development

Council is committed to the development of its Members so as to promote effective and informed decision-making. The CEO and governance staff shall arrange appropriate training and development opportunities for Elected Members as opportunity and circumstance dictate.

The public interest test and costs / benefit analysis shall be applied whenever potential training and development opportunities are scoped.

6.9.1 Local Government Act takes precedent

The *Local Government Act 2019*, its Statutory Instruments prevail over this Policy in the event of a conflict or inconsistency.

7. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 2019</i>
	<i>Local Government Guideline 2A</i>
	<i>Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 (Cth)</i>
Australian Taxation Office	<i>Recommendations for Travel Allowances</i>

8. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Policy number	006
Policy Owner	Governance
Endorsed by	OCM
Date approved	26/06/2013
Revisions	30 March 2016, July 2017, April 2022
Amendments	30 March 2016, 23 August 2017, April 2022
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9. CONTACT PERSON

Position **Manager Corporate Compliance**
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