

TITLE:	Elected Member Allowances Policy		
DIVISION:	Governance		
ADOPTED BY:	Barkly Regional Council		
DATE OF ADOPTION:	23 February 2018	DATE OF REVIEW:	February 2022
MOTION NUMBER:	OC 52/18		
POLICY NUMBER:	CP000011		
AUTHORISED:	Chief Executive Officer		

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:

Elected Members

PREAMBLE

The aim of all policy is for Councillors to provide strategic input into the effective operational framework of the organisation under S.11 of the Local Government Act

SUMMARY

The Elected Members Allowances Policy is based upon the requirements of the Ministerial Guidelines: It addresses when Allowances may be claimed, the procedure for claiming them, method of payment and when an Extra Meeting Allowance may be claimed.

OBJECTIVES

- To establish Council's policy in relation to payment of allowances in compliance with the Minister's Guidelines on Allowances for Council's Members.
- To set out rates of allowances payable to Elected Members for the 2017/18 financial year.

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to the Local Government Act the Minister has issued a Ministerial Guideline on Allowances for Council Members which the Council is required to comply with.

POLICY STATEMENT

The policy is based on the following principles set out in the *Local Government Act* (the Act) and the Ministerial Guideline on Allowances for Council Members (the Minister's Guidelines):

- The maximum allowances payable are limited to the value defined in the Minister's Guideline issued each year.
- Section 71(1) of the Act provides that, "a member of council is entitled to be paid an allowance by the council." Section 71(2) qualifies this by providing that, "The allowance is to be at a rate fixed by council (subject to guidelines issued by the Minister) for the relevant financial year."
- Section 71(5) of the Act states that "Allowances are to be paid as determined by the council but are not to be paid in advance."
- The Minister's Guidelines established a requirement for Council to have a policy in relation to payment of certain allowances.

- Barkly Regional Council pay allowances to Elected Members in line with the Minister's Guidelines and this policy.
- A copy of the rates of allowances set by Council for 2017/18 year is included below
- Pursuant to Section 71 and 72 of the Local Government Act 2008 and the Local Government Act Ministerial Guidelines, this Policy clarifies the Allowances and Expenses to be paid to Elected Members, Professional Development and Council Approved Activities and travel.

PROCEDURE:

Base Allowance and Electoral Allowance

The Minister's Guidelines detail the amounts claimable for the 2017/18 which are paid by the Council. The base allowance covers:

- (a) Agenda study and meeting preparation;
- (b) Attendance at regular Council meetings;
- (c) Attendance at social functions as a Council Representative
- (d) Constituency responsibilities; and
- (e) Council representation outside the Local Authority area, including delegations interstate and overseas, unless such representation has extra meeting approval

Elected Members can choose to have some or all of their professional development or other allowances paid into a superannuation fund.

Extra Meeting Allowance

Section 2, of the Local Government Act Ministerial Guideline 2 states as follows:

1. For a principal member, deputy principal member and acting principal member, this allowance is not paid separately. It is provided for and included in the base allowance
2. For other council members this allowance is paid only after an approved claim has been made
3. In accordance with Section 2 (1) of the Local Government Act 2008 Ministerial Guideline No. 2, the Barkly Regional Council has determined only the following meetings will attract the allowance:
 - (i) Council Committee Meetings;
 - (ii) Council Advisory Group Meetings;
 - (iii) Special Meetings of Council and Special Meetings of Council Committees;
 - (iv) Council workshops or briefings;
 - (v) 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;
 - (vi) Professional development courses / conferences that have approval and are in line with Council Policy.

Claims for Extra Meeting allowance should be made on an approved Member Allowance Claim form.

Professional Development Allowance

A Professional Development allowance will be paid to any Elected Member for reimbursement fees paid for courses/conference expenditure/professional membership, as defined in the Minister's Guidelines, where attendance has been approved by Council.

Membership Type	Base Allowance	Electoral Allowance	Professional Development Allowance	Max Extra Meeting Allowance	Daily Rate	Total Claimable
Ordinary Council Member	\$13,151.83	\$4,812.67	\$3,653.68	\$8,767.88		\$30,386.06
Acting Principal Member					\$254.42	\$22897.80 (90 Days)
Deputy Principal Member	\$27,039.81	\$4,812.67	\$3,653.68			\$35506.16
Principal Member	\$73,125.37	\$19,247.18	\$3,653.68			\$96,026.23

The Local Government Act Guideline 2 definition:

An allowance payable to council members to attend appropriate and relevant conferences or training courses which sustain a member’s professional competence by keeping the member informed of, and able to comply with, development in professional standards applicable to their role as a council member. Any such course/conference must have approval and be in line with council policy in order to attract this allowance.

- This allowance is available to all council members.
- The professional development allowance may be claimed multiple times each year, but the total value of those claims must not exceed the amount specified in the Guidelines.
- The professional development allowance is to 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.
- Claims must be made using approved forms.
- Only approved courses/conferences that are in line with council policy attract professional development allowance (payable for each day of attendance)

Pursuant to Section 2, 6 (e) of the Local Government Act Ministerial Guideline 2, use of the Professional Development Allowance must be:

- (i) approved by the Chief Executive Officer, prior to attendance at a professional development activity;

In accordance with Section 71(5) of the Local Government Act 2008(As amended), these 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; and

- (ii) for an approved Course or Conference, requires the completion of relevant forms if claiming an ‘Extra Meeting Allowance’ during the period of attendance.

Elected Members may access the annual Professional Development allocation by completing the appropriate form and submitting to the Chief Executive Officer for approval, prior to any commitments being made.

APPROVED COURSES

The Chief Executive Officer will approve such applications if the expenditure supports an Elected Member to:

- further his/her knowledge of Local Government;
- undertake courses of study in a discipline that would assist in the performance as an Elected Member;
- attend a course/conference on a topic or function related to Local Government;

The expenses may cover reasonable travel, accommodation, meals, course fees, conference fees and appropriate associated expenses.

Subject to the expense being approved in advance, payment will be made through the Council's purchasing system direct to the provider of the conference etc. or by the way of reimbursement being claimed by the Member and supported by receipts, tax invoices or other evidence of the expense being incurred.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

When Council Members are required to attend a conference, workshop or seminar organized by the Government authorities such as LGANT for their Annual Conferences, Bi-Annual Meetings, Government Briefings etc., the travel, accommodation and associated travel costs are to be covered at Council's expense prior to approval from the CEO.

In accordance with Section 71(2) and 72(b) of the Local Government Act 2008(As amended), when a Member of Council is required to travel outside the Barkly region to attend Council approved activities, the Council shall meet all reasonable travel, conference, meals and accommodation fees associated with that attendance.

In accordance with Section 7 (4) (d) of the Local Government Act Ministerial Guideline 2, when a Council Member is required to travel in order to attend an approved activity, the Council Member may claim an extra meeting allowance for each full day of travel, unless that travel falls on the same day on which the meeting is held.

In this context, a full day of travelling means at least four hours of travelling, which may include time in transit. The Council shall meet the cost of air travel where required for Aldermen attending a Council Approved Activity.

Flight Tickets

In normal circumstances the Council will purchase the most economical class of travel ticket available for Councillors. This might be a discounted ticket or an economy ticket. Business class tickets will not be purchased for Councillors. Should an Elected Member choose to change or alter bookings for personal reasons, the additional cost of these changes shall be met by the Elected Member.

Air travel arrangements are generally made through the Council purchasing system and approved travel agent. Reimbursement of travel expenses may be claimed in special circumstances, subject to satisfactory documentation Example: Tax invoice. The Council allows Elected Members to retain and make personal use of any frequent flyer points earned whilst travelling at Council's expense.

EXTRA MEETING ALLOWANCE

Extra Meeting Allowance will be paid for attendance at the following meetings only:

- Local Board meetings where the Board is situated within the Ward represented by the Member
- Council Meetings other than the 12 ordinary meetings per year;
- Council Committee meetings;
- Meetings of the CEO Interview Panel;
- Bi-annual Meetings of LGANT; and
- Any other meetings where Council has by resolution determined to pay the Allowance;

Subject to the proviso that only one Extra Meeting Allowance can be claimed in respect to each calendar day.

LEGISLATION, TERMINOLOGY AND REFERENCES

NT Local Government Act
Ministerial Guideline on Allowances for Council Members

The definitions as contained in the Minister's Guidelines are used for the following:

- Acting Principal Member
- Base Allowance
- Electoral Allowance
- Extra Meeting Allowance
- Ordinary Council Member
- Professional Development Allowance

IMPLEMENTATION AND DELEGATION

The CEO has delegated authority to implement this policy

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This Policy is to be reviewed every four (4) years, and may be reviewed at other times at the discretion of Chief Executive Officer.