

<b>TITLE:</b>	Elected Member Allowances Policy		
<b>DIVISION:</b>	Governance		
<b>ADOPTED BY:</b>	Council		
<b>DATE OF ADOPTION:</b>	December 2019	<b>DATE OF REVIEW:</b>	December 2022
<b>MOTION NUMBER:</b>	OC 50/20		
<b>POLICY NUMBER:</b>	CP11		
<b>AUTHORISED:</b>	Chief Executive Officer		

#### **THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:**

All Elected Members of the Barkly Regional Council

#### **PREAMBLE**

The aim of all policy is for Elected Members to provide strategic input into the effective operational framework of the organisation under section 11 of the Local Government Act (NT).

#### **SUMMARY**

The Elected Members Allowances Policy is based upon the requirements of the Local Government Act (NT) and Ministerial Guidelines and addresses when Allowances may be claimed, the procedure for claiming them, method of payment and when an Extra Meeting Allowance may be claimed.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Establish Council's policy in relation to payment of allowances in compliance with the Minister's Guidelines on Allowances for Council's Members;
- Provide clarity over the types of meetings that Elected Members are entitled to an allowance for; and
- Set rates of allowances payable to Elected Members each Financial Year.

#### **BACKGROUND**

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

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The policy is based on the following principles set out in the Local Government Act and the Ministerial Guideline on Allowances for Elected Members:

- 1) The maximum allowances payable are limited to the value defined in the Minister's Guideline issued each year;
- 2) Section 71(1) of the Act provides that, "a member of council is entitled to be paid an allowance by the council."
- 3) 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”;
- 4) 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”; and
  - 5) The Minister’s Guidelines established a requirement for Council to have a policy in relation to payment of certain allowances;
  - 6) Barkly Regional Council pay allowances to Elected Members in line with the Minister’s Guidelines and this policy;
  - 7) A copy of the rates of allowances set by Council for 2019-2020 is included below; and
  - 8) Pursuant to Section 71 and 72 of the *Local Government Act* and the Ministerial Guidelines, this policy establishes the Allowances to be paid to Elected Members.

## **PROCEDURE:**

### Base Allowance and Electoral Allowance

The Minister’s Guidelines details the maximum amounts claimable for each financial year which are to be paid by the Council. The base and electoral allowances cover:

- 1) Agenda study and meeting preparation;
- 2) Attendance at regular Council meetings;
- 3) Attendance at social functions as a Council Representative;
- 4) Constituency responsibilities; and
- 5) Council representation outside the Local Authority area, including delegations interstate and overseas, unless such representation has extra meeting approval.

The monthly allowance is to be 1/12<sup>th</sup> of the total annual allowance paid in arrears.

### Extra Meeting Allowance

Section 2 of the 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 Elected Members, this allowance is paid only after an approved claim has been made.
- 3) In accordance with Section 2(1) of the Ministerial Guideline 2, Council has determined only the following meetings will attract the allowance:
  - (a) Council Committee Meetings;
  - (b) Special Meetings of Council and Special Meetings of Council Committees;
  - (c) Council workshops or briefings;
  - (d) Barkly Regional Deal Governance and Working Groups;
  - (e) 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 (where a meeting allowance is not paid by that external agency or organisation);
  - (f) Local Authority meetings where the Authority is situated within the Ward represented by the Member;
  - (g) Meetings of the CEO Interview Panel; and
  - (h) Any other meetings where Council has by resolution determined to pay the Allowance.
- 4) An Extra Meeting Allowance may be paid for Professional Development courses/conferences that have approval and are in line with Council Policy. The payment of such allowances will constitute the payment of a “Professional Development Allowance” for the purposes of Ministerial Guideline 2:

- 5) To be eligible for the Allowance the meeting must be a full meeting (the exception being Provisional Council Meetings and Provisional Local Authority Meetings), convened for a period of not less than two hours.
- 6) Only one Extra Meeting Allowance can be claimed in respect to each calendar day.
- 7) For the avoidance of doubt, Council Sub-Committee and Council Working Group meetings do not attract an Extra Meeting Allowance.

The Chief Executive Officer has the absolute discretion to waive the requirements of clause 6) of this section to make extra meeting allowance payments.

Examples of Meetings of Committees that attract an allowance and do not attract an allowance are detailed in Schedule One to this Policy.

The rate for the Extra Meeting allowance is as set out in Schedule Two. The total annual allowance is capped as per the Minister's Guidelines. Schedule Two provides detailed of the maximum amount.

Claims for Extra Meeting Allowance should be made on an approved Elected Member Extra Meeting Allowance Claim form and submitted to the CEO for payment.

#### Professional Development Allowance

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

#### *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.

- 1) This allowance is available to all Elected Members;
- 2) 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;
- 3) 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;
- 4) Claims must be made using approved forms;
- 5) 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:

- 1) Approved by the Chief Executive Officer, prior to attendance at a professional development activity;
- 2) In accordance with Section 71(5) of the Local Government Act, 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
- 3) For an approved Course or Conference, requires the completion of relevant forms if claiming an 'Extra Meeting Allowance' during the period of attendance.

The Professional Development Allowance can also be claimed by direct payment by Council to a third body to cover course/conference related expenditure where attendance has been approved by the CEO. The claim for direct payment can be made through councils procurement procedures on authority of the CEO. The total annual claim for Professional Development is capped under Schedule Two.

Elected Members may access the annual Professional Development allocation by completing the appropriate form and submitting to the CEO 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; and/or
- 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. Reasonable expenses will be determined at the CEO's absolute discretion.

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 Elected 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 an Elected Member is required to travel in order to attend an approved activity, the Elected 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 attending a Council Approved Activity.

### ***Flight Tickets***

In normal circumstances the Council will purchase the most economical class of travel ticket available for Elected Members. This might be a discounted ticket or an economy ticket. Business class tickets will not be purchased by Council for Elected Members. 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.

### Frequency of Payment

Payment of all approved claims submitted to the CEO will be made within 21 working days. The payments will be in arrears of meetings attended and will be made by electronic funds transfer to the member's nominated bank account.

A remittance will be produced and forwarded to the member detailing the claims that have been included in the payment.

Claims not submitted within three months of the meeting date will be forfeited in line with the Minister's Guidelines.

Elected Members can choose to have some or all of their allowance paid into a superannuation fund.

## **LEGISLATION, TERMINOLOGY AND REFERENCES**

Local Government Act (NT)

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 annually, and may be reviewed at other times at the discretion of Chief Executive Officer.

## SCHEDULE ONE

### Council Committees

#### Paid By Council

- Purkiss Reserve Consultative Committee
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Cultural Advisory Committee
- Local Authorities

#### Unpaid

- Procurement Sub-Committee
- HR Sub-Committee
- Friends of the Cemetery Sub-Committee
- Environmental and Sustainability Sub-Committee
- Youth Advisory Council
- Animal Management Working Group
- Domestic and Family Violence Working Group

### EXTERNAL COMMITTEES

#### Paid By Council

- Animal Welfare Advisory Committee
- Regional Deal Backbone and related Working Groups
- NT Water Safety Committee
- Local Government Safe Cities Network
- Regional Development Australia NT
- Barkly Regional Consumer Advisory Group
- Barkly Work Camp Community Consultative Committee
- Beetaloo Region User Panel for the Geological/Bio-Regional Assessment Program

#### Travel Paid by External Party – Council Pays Extra Meeting Allowance

- NT Place Names Committee
- NT Tobacco Control Action Committee

#### Paid Entirely by External Party

- Development Consent Authority Committee

#### Unpaid

- Tennant Creek Alcohol Reference Group
- Chamber of Commerce NT
- Barkly Regional Accommodation Action Group

## SCHEDULE TWO

### Approved Allowance Rates and Limits

In accordance with Section 71 of the *Local Government Act (NT)*, Council proposes to pay the following elected member allowances in 2019/2020:

<b>Elected Member Allowances</b>			
<b>Allowance</b>	<b>Mayor</b>	<b>Deputy-Mayor</b>	<b>Elected Members</b>
Base Allowance	\$74,742.90	\$27,637.93	\$13,442.75
Electoral Allowance	\$19,672.93	\$4,919.13	\$4,919.13
PD Allowance	\$3,734.50	\$3,734.50	\$3,734.50
Maximum Extra Meeting Allowance	-	-	\$8,961.83
<b>Total Claimable</b>	<b>\$98,150.33</b>	<b>\$36,291.56</b>	<b>\$31,058.21</b>
<b>Acting Principal Member Allowance</b>		The maximum Acting Principal Member Allowance is 90 days per acting Principal Member.	
<b>Allowance</b>	<b>Amount</b>		
Daily Rate	\$260.04		
Maximum Claimable	\$23,403.60		

Extra Meeting Allowance to be paid at the maximum rate of \$232.15.