

TITLE:	Travel & Accommodation Policy - Elected Members		
DIVISION:	Corporate		
ADOPTED BY:	Barkly Regional Council		
DATE OF ADOPTION:	14 September 2017	DATE OF REVIEW:	Annually
MOTION NUMBER:	OC 157/17		
POLICY NUMBER:	CP00053		
AUTHORISED:	Barkly Regional Council		

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:

All Barkly Regional Council Elected Members.

SUMMARY

The Members Travel Policy is a statement of the standard by which Barkly Regional Council (BRC) aims to conduct its business as well as its obligations to comply with all local government laws and regulations. This policy is a set of principles to consider when official work is being undertaken or arranged including airline travel that requires BRC members to stay overnight in a location other than their primary residence.

OBJECTIVES

All travel made by Elected Members of Barkly Regional Council for official business under Section 72 of the *Local Government Act* and Guideline 2.

The Professional Development allowances is to be used to cover the cost of travel to the course or conference, course or conference fees, meals and accommodation for the duration of the course or conference. Claims must be made using the approved BRC forms and only approved courses or conferences consistent with Council policy attract professional development allowance.

BACKGROUND

An Elected Member who is required to be absent overnight from their usual place of work on official work travel will be paid an entitlement for incidentals and meal expenses (as per the travel allowance form) occurring during the period while undertaking official work travel. Overnight travel expenses are currently not subject to tax instalment deductions, and will not be unless required by taxation legislation. Elected Members while undertaking official travel will be out of pocket for reasonable expenses. However, no Elected Members will gain a financial advantage through the travelling allowance arrangement.

POLICY

Approval for attendance at conferences, seminars and other meetings by Elected Members should generally be approved by Council resolution. However, if not practical, approval may be given by the President and the CEO. Should attendance be proposed by the President, approval may be given by the Deputy President and/or another Councillor with the CEOs attendance to be approved by the President.

Council may, by resolution, agree to pay expenses for a spouse/partner or accompanying person where a function is of a formal or ceremonial nature and it is considered that they be reasonably expected to attend. Alternatively, approval may be given by the President and CEO. Should attendance be proposed by the President’s or CEO’s partner, approval may be given by the Deputy President and/or another Councillor.

Where Council is represented by a person requiring assistance for the reason of disability, the accompanying person shall be given the same privileges as the representative regarding travel, accommodation and reasonable expenses incurred.

Council shall pay all conference registration fees, including the costs related to official lunches and dinners and associated tours where they are relevant to the business and interest of Council. Prepayment of registration fees, flights and accommodation must be arranged through the Executive Assistant who will ensure that arrangements are made as soon as possible and the best discounts are obtained.

ALLOWANCES

Travel Allowance

Travel Allowance is provided to Elected Members conducting official business that requires overnight absence from normal place of work in a location where commercial accommodation is available. Travel Allowance comprises meals and incidental expenses based on rates determined by the Australian Taxation Office. Where the allowance determined by the Australian Taxation Office is not considered appropriate in respect of a particular travel situation, the CEO may substitute a greater or lesser amount to be paid depending on the particular travel situation.

Allowance	Rate
Accommodation	Corporate or Flat rate arranged by the Executive Assistant
Breakfast	\$24.25 per day – travel occurs before 8am
Lunch	\$27.65 per day – travel occurs between 12 – 2pm
Dinner	\$47.70 per day – travel occurs after 6pm
Incidentals	\$19.35 per day

Table above based on the ATO’s – Tax Determination TD2017-2019 & TR 2004/6

Motor Vehicle Expenses	Rate
Kilometre rate	\$0.66 per kilometre (use of private vehicle)

Table above from ATO – Motor Vehicle Expenses

Payment

Payments for allowance will be paid to Elected Members into their bank account of their choice as per BRC’s Payment Schedule. Where an Elected Member does not attend the required course or meeting for which travel allowance and accommodation has been provided without appropriate justification to the CEO or relevant Director, the Elected Member will reimburse the payment from their next available allowance by completing an Authority to Deduct form. Travel payments may be made in advance at the CEO’s discretion.

Adjustments to Payments

Should the Elected Member return earlier from a trip, a repayment will be required if a Travel Allowance was provided in advance. The Finance Department will advise the Elected Member via email of the amount overpaid. Conversely additional amounts acquired, as the result of a later return than planned will be paid upon advice of the revised return details.

TRAVEL

Travel relates to all modes of travel. It includes flights, taxis, public transport, hire car and council vehicle. The mode of travel used for official travel should be approved prior travel and arranged with the Fleet Officer.

Air Charter/ Air Travel

All chartered planes must be approved by either the President, CEO or the CEO's delegate prior to departing. All chartered planes must be budgeted for in each financial year. Flight booking for all chartered flights will be arranged by the Executive Assistant.

Vehicle Travel

BRC will make every effort to provide an official vehicle for the duty. A rental vehicle will be provided in the absence of availability of council vehicles. Where an Elected Member has to use their personal vehicle, a mileage allowance per km as approved in Travel Allowance Claim Form be provided. Fuel cards will be provided for the use of a Council vehicle. Where Fuel card has not been provided, purchase orders are to be raised and approved by authorised personnel prior to filling the fuel tank. In the event where employee has no choice but to make out of pocket payment for fuel, receipts are to be kept for reimbursement. Reimbursements should be claimed by submitting an approved Travel Allowance Claim Form.

Taxis

It will be the responsibility of the person travelling to organise their own taxi request. Receipts are to be kept for reimbursement. Reimbursement should be claimed by submitting an approved Expense Reimbursement Claim Form.

Private Vehicle Allowance

Where the President, CEO or the CEO's delegate has authorised the use of private vehicle, a mileage allowance per km as approved by in the Travel Allowance Claim Form will be paid. (See Motor Vehicle Expenses table on page 2).

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation for Elected members for attending official BRC business will be booked and paid for by BRC.

Purchase Orders must be raised prior to accommodation booking unless a reimbursement or BRC Corporate credit card has been used. Additional expenses incurred in accommodation such as telephone calls, room service or mini-bar supplies will be the Elected Member's own responsibility. Funds will not be paid in lieu of accommodation. All accommodation reimbursements must use BRC Reimbursement Claim Form.

RISK MANAGEMENT

This assessment considers the risks that would arise should an inadequate Elected Members Travel and Accommodation policy exist. Where risks exist, the recommended actions should be followed, mitigation strategy developed, and included in the BRC risk register.

TERMINOLOGY & DEFINITIONS

ATO	Australian Tax Office
Official Business	Business conducted on behalf of, and approved by BRC, either to fulfil a legislative requirement or to achieve a benefit for BRC Councillor's attendance at external courses, conferences, seminars or workshops.
TD	Taxation Determination
TR	Taxation Ruling
Travel Allowance	A travel allowance is a sum of money paid to you, generally before you start travelling. It gives you funds to pay for your travel costs.
Work	Includes any activity

REFERENCES

Travel Allowance Claim Form
Reimbursement Claim Form
Authority to Travel Form

LEGISLATION & STANDARDS

Local Government Act
ATO – TD 2017/19
ATO - TR 2004/6

LINKS

<https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/LOCAL-GOVERNMENT-ACT>
<https://www.ato.gov.au/law/view/document?DocID=TXD/TD201719/NAT/ATO/00001>

RESPONSIBILITY & DELEGATION

The Barkly Regional Council and the CEO has delegated authority to make determinations in relation to eligibility for travel allowance and the termination of claims for travel allowance, subject to compliance with legislative requirements of this policy.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy should be evaluated on the basis that the Audit Committee is satisfied that it has been and is being implemented.

This policy to be reviewed annually as the ATO Taxation Determinations and Taxation Rulings are reviewed each financial year.