Council Members' Allowances and Benefits Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

The District Council of Karoonda East Murray ("Council") ensures that the payment of Council Member allowances, the reimbursement of expenses, and the provision of benefits are accountable, transparent, and compliant with the Local Government Act 1999 ("the Act") and the Local Government (Members Allowances and Benefits) Regulations 2010 ("the Regulations").

This Policy specifies the allowances, reimbursements, facilities, and support available to Council Members, and sets out the processes for claiming reimbursements and recording benefits in accordance with sections 76–79 of the Act.

This Policy also operates as the Council's formal approval under section 77(1)(b) for reimbursement of additional expenses.

This Policy automatically lapses at the next general election and must be reviewed and adopted by the incoming Council within 12 months of that election.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVE

To ensure Council Member allowances, reimbursements, facilities, and support are provided:

- in accordance with the Act and Regulations
- in a transparent and accountable manner
- in a way that supports Council Members to perform their roles effectively
- without Council Members being out-of-pocket for expenses necessarily incurred in performing their official duties.

3. SCOPE & RESPONSIBILITIES

Council Members

Council Members must comply with this Policy and ensure all claims for reimbursement are accurate, necessary, and supported by evidence.

Chief Executive Officer

The CEO is responsible for:

· maintaining the Register of Allowances and Benefits

· implementing CPI adjustments and any other changes required by the current Remuneration Tribunal Determination

· administering reimbursement processes

· ensuring this Policy is published and provided to all Council Members

· ensuring quarterly reporting and record-keeping requirements are met.

4. POLICY PRINCIPLES

This Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- Council Members should not be out-of-pocket for expenses necessarily incurred in performing their official duties.
- Facilities and support provided to Council Members must be made available on a uniform basis (except where specific provisions apply to the Principal Member).
- Reimbursements must relate only to expenses actually and necessarily incurred in performing official Council duties.
- Council encourages ongoing training and development for Council Members.
- Public money must be managed responsibly, transparently, and in the public interest.

5. ALLOWANCES

Council Member allowances are determined by the **current Remuneration Tribunal Determination** applicable to the Council's group classification.

Allowances:

· commence at the conclusion of each periodic election

· are adjusted automatically on the first, second, and third anniversaries of the election in accordance with CPI changes

· may be paid up to three months in advance or arrears, as permitted by Regulation 4

· must be paid until the conclusion of the Council Member's term (final declaration of election results).

Council Member allowances will be paid quarterly in arrears by electronic funds transfer to a nominated bank account.

A statement of earnings will be provided annually.

6. LEAVE OF ABSENCE – STATE ELECTION CANDIDATES

Council Members who nominate for State Parliament automatically receive a leave of absence under section 55A of the Act. During this period, they:

- are not entitled to allowances or reimbursements
- must not use Council facilities or support
- must not perform any Council duties.

7. MANDATORY REIUMBURSEMENTS – TRAVEL (S77(1)(A))

Council Members are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses necessarily incurred for **eligible journeys** within the Council area to attend a **prescribed meeting**.

Eligible journeys are between:

- the Council Member's principal place of residence or work, and
- the place of a prescribed meeting.

Reimbursement is based on:

- cents-per-kilometre rates determined by the Australian Taxation Office
- actual costs for public transport (receipts required)
- shortest or most practicable route

8. MANDATORY REIMBURSEMENTS – CHILD/ DEPENDANT CARE (S77(1)(A))

Council Members are entitled to reimbursement for child or dependant care expenses necessarily incurred due to attendance at a prescribed meeting.

Care provided by a person who ordinarily resides with the Council Member is not reimbursable.

9. ADIITIONAL REIMBURSEMENTS – S77(1)(B)

Council approves reimbursement of the following additional expenses:

9.1 Travel (outside Council area or Council business functions)

Reimbursement applies to travel necessarily incurred for:

- attendance at Council business functions (e.g., citizenship ceremonies, official openings, inspections related to agenda items)
- attendance as a Council-appointed representative at community meetings
- eligible journeys outside the Council area.

Reimbursement is based on:

- ATO cents-per-kilometre rates
- actual costs for public transport, taxis, parking (receipts required)
- shortest or most practicable route.

9.2 Child/Dependant Care (Council business functions)

Reimbursement applies to care expenses incurred due to attendance at Council business functions (not prescribed meetings).

9.3 Conferences, Training, Seminars

Reimbursement applies to expenses necessarily incurred for attendance at approved conferences, seminars, training courses, including:

- registration fees
- accommodation
- meals (excluding alcohol)
- travel

- incidentals
- parking

9.4 Telecommunications and ICT

Reimbursement applies to expenses incurred for:

- mobile phone use
- internet access
- printer cartridges
- software or applications required for Council business.

10. FACILITIES AND SUPPORT

Council will provide facilities and support necessary or expedient for Council Members to perform their duties, including:

- digital devices (e.g., tablets)
- access to Council meeting rooms
- ICT support.

Conditions:

- Facilities remain Council property.
- Facilities must be returned at the end of the Council Member's term.
- Damage or loss must be reported.
- Facilities must not be used for election campaigning.

11. SUPERANNUATION REDIRECTION (ATO ID 2007/205)

Council Members may elect to **forego all or part of their allowance** and have the Council contribute that amount to a **complying superannuation fund**, provided:

- the election is made **before the allowance is earned**
- the arrangement is documented and approved under this Policy
- the arrangement applies equally to all Council Members
- contributions are recorded for cap-monitoring purposes
- contributions are reported in the Register of Allowances and Benefits
- contributions do not create SG obligations or FBT liabilities
- Members do **not** seek reimbursement for expenses normally covered by the allowance ("no double dipping").

This arrangement reflects ATO ID 2007/205 and does not require Council to become an "eligible local governing body".

12. TRAVEL TIME PAYMENT

Council Members of non-metropolitan councils are entitled to **Travel Time Payments** in accordance with the current **Remuneration Tribunal Determination**.

Amounts are not listed in this Policy and will be applied automatically as determined by the Tribunal.

13. CLAIMING REIMBURSEMENTS

Council Members must:

- submit claims quarterly
- use approved claim forms
- provide receipts or evidence of expenditure
- certify that claims are accurate and comply with this Policy

14. REGISTER OF ALLOWANCES AND BENEFITS

The CEO must maintain a Register recording:

- annual allowances
- reimbursements under s77(1)(b)
- benefits provided to Council Members
- superannuation redirection amounts
- quarterly updates.

The Register must be published on the Council's website and available in printed form on request.

9. DOCUMENT AND ADMINISTRATION CONTROL

COUNCIL POLICY	
Policy title:	Council Member's Allowances and Benefits Policy
Responsible officer:	Chief Executive Officer
First issued/adopted:	8 May 2001
Review frequency:	Within 12 Months of Council Election
Last reviewed:	20 October 2026
Next review date:	April 2027