



Ararat Rural City

# International and Interstate Travel Policy

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Governance Team

## **INTENT**

It is recognised that there are occasions when Councillors or employee may be required to undertake international or interstate travel in the course of council business. This policy ensures that any such travel is transparent to the community and has an identifiable benefit to Council and/or to the municipality of Ararat Rural City Council.

## **POLICY**

This policy has been developed to provide guidelines for business related travel for Councillors and employee, which include:

- Clarifying the approval process for international and interstate travel by Councillors and employees in an official capacity;
- Ensures effective reporting mechanisms are in place;
- Outlines the process for reimbursement of expenses associated with such travel; and
- Ensures the statutory register of overseas and interstate travel is maintained in accordance with the Regulations.

## **APPLYING FOR INTERNATIONAL OR INTERSTATE TRAVEL**

All applications for international or interstate travel need to be made by the Councillor or employee through completing the 'Application for International & Interstate Travel' form and submitting it to the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer for approval.

International travel will be dealt with only in exceptional circumstances.

Councillors or employees applying for international or interstate travel must be able to demonstrate within their application:

- The benefit to themselves that the travel will allow for;
- The benefit to the organisation that the travel will allow for;
- The transferability of learning that will occur by undertaking the travel; and
- The process that they will undertake for sharing the learning they have obtained both personally and organisationally to other areas within Council.

Applications for international and interstate travel should be accompanied by the following where applicable:

- Details of budget provisions;
- All literature regarding the activity;
- Summary of travel dates, conference or study dates and the recognition of independent leisure time if applicable;
- Summary of cost implications for Council;
- Summary of personal costs incurred by the applicant;
- Any private activities that are to be undertaken in addition to business (e.g. additional travel following or preceding the event).

Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application by the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer. Feedback surrounding the approval or refusal of the application will also be provided by the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer.

## REQUIREMENTS SURROUNDING INTERNATIONAL AND INTERSTATE TRAVEL

International and interstate travel as discussed in this policy, can only be accessed by permanent employees with greater than 12 months of employment service to the Council unless otherwise approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

All international and interstate travel must be recorded in the travel register.

Councillors participating in international or interstate travel will be required to provide Council with a financial record and diary of activities and report on their return.

Employees participating in international or interstate travel will be required to provide the Chief Executive Officer with a full report of the programs undertaken. Such reports must reflect the organisational benefits surrounding the travel and associated activities, including how the knowledge gained could be best applied within Council.

In the circumstance where a Councillor or an employee has been invited to speak at a conference or provide educational / knowledge assistance, their expenses may be paid for by the external provider. For approval to attend in the above-mentioned circumstances the applicant must still submit an 'Application for International & Interstate travel' form for approval.

All Councillors and employees representing the Council within a public domain or undertaking activities that have been funded by the Council must always comply with the Councillor Code of Conduct or the Staff Code of Conduct.

## TRAVEL PROVISIONS

All approved costs associated with overseas/interstate travel are to be funded within the relevant budget of the Councillor or employee undertaking the travel.

### Air Travel

Air travel will be booked and paid for directly by Council. All international and interstate travel will be Economy Class. Should a Councillor or employee elect to use an alternate carrier or class of travel other than that recommended by Council then the increased cost difference must be met by the Councillor or employee.

It is the responsibility of the Councillor or employee to ensure they have all flight details and have confirmed their flights prior to travel. Additionally, the Councillor or employee must ensure they have allocated enough time to travel to the airport and be processed through check-in and security checks. Proof of identity (i.e. driver's licence or passport) is required at the airport check-in counter. Any excess baggage charge of a private nature over the assigned weight for the aircraft is the responsibility of the Councillor/employee travelling.

In the circumstances where flights are changed, rescheduled, cancelled, or missed due to the Councillor or employee's work commitments or an occurrence of an unforeseen event, there will be no charge to the individual. In all other instances the Councillor or employee travelling will incur the cost if they happen to miss flights through their own error.

## Ground Travel and Transfers

It is preferred that Councillors or employees use public transport (bus, train or ferry) to move around the area they are located in.

For travel to and from the airport, Councillors or employees can hire a taxi where the hotel / motel in which they are staying doesn't provide a free shuttle transfer service.

Reimbursement will be made for public transport and taxi fares or for fuel costs related to hire car usage for business purposes by the Councillor or employee issuing a receipt on return.

In the event that a rental car is required, the most appropriate car is to be arranged bearing in mind cost and travel requirements. Any infringements incurred during the use of a rental car will be at the personal responsibility of the driver. The Councillor or employee is responsible for ensuring they hold the appropriate licenses to drive the vehicle in the location of hire and that they adhere to the local laws in relation to driving.

## Accommodation

Accommodation will be booked and paid for directly by Council prior to departure where possible. Accommodation should be booked giving consideration to the location where business is to be conducted and the costs of the accommodation.

Councillors or employees will be booked into suitable accommodation for the duration of the time they are required to be away. Accommodation will be booked at or within proximity of the conference, seminar, training course or meeting.

A Councillor or employee is entitled to their own private single room. Any additional accommodation costs incurred as a result of extra days and/or the attendance of partners and/or children shall be borne by the Councillor or employee.

All travel and accommodation are to be booked through the Governance Unit.

## Meals

Where a Councillor or employee is required to stay away from their normal residence in order to attend a conference, seminar, training course or meeting, they will be entitled to receive reimbursement for their meals during this time.

## Mobile Phone Usage

Where a Councillor or employee has a Council mobile phone for work related purposes they may apply for international roaming for the duration of their travel and discuss usage and data information rates with the Information Services team before departure. All usage of the mobile phone will be in accordance with the Council's Mobile Phone policy.

## Other Expenses

All legitimate and reasonable expenses incurred in connection with the Councillor or employee's duties will be paid or reimbursed. Council will not reimburse the Councillor or employee for out of pocket travel expenses without proof. A Councillor or employee must provide receipts or proof of expenditure for reimbursement to occur.

Reasonable expenses include:

- Air Fares;
- Ground Transfers;
- Accommodation;
- Meals;
- Parking;
- Course registration costs;
- Visa entry and exit fees;
- Departure taxes;
- Laundry expenses, where the travel period has been for more than five days.

As a guide the following are non-reimbursable expenses. This list is not all inclusive:

- Any items of personal expenditure;
- Excess baggage that is for personal use;
- Items purchased for travel;
- Mini-bar charges and in-house entertainment (movies, pay per view events);
- Laundry expenses, where the travel period has been for less than three days;
- Phone calls – land line and mobile phone.

## Post Attendance Arrangements

Upon return from international or interstate travel, the Councillor or employee will make application for reimbursement of expenditures within five (5) working days.

Councillors will be required to provide reports and/or presentations to Council to show the benefit from the knowledge they have gained.

Employees who participate in international travel for business purposes will be required to provide a report and presentation to the Chief Executive Officer within 21 days of their return to Council. The content of the presentation and report will be at the request of the Chief Executive Officer. Employees will also be responsible for sharing all relevant learnings in line with Council's Training & Development policy.

## Private activities in association with Business Travel

Councillors or employees seeking to undertake private travel/activities in conjunction with international business travel shall obtain the approval of the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer prior to making any arrangements. This should be noted in the 'Application for International & Interstate Travel' form and for employees accompanied by a completed 'Leave Application' form. If permission is granted to do so, the Councillor or employee will be responsible for all associated expenses relating to the private travel and activities.

Where members of the Councillor or employee's family are travelling also, arrangements may be made to provide for the family to travel and stay together. The Councillor or employee will be responsible for all associated expenses for their family.

## Travel and Personal Accident Insurance

Councillors and employees are provided travel insurance cover under Council's personal accident insurance policy for the following events:

- Capital Benefits (Death, disablement etc.);
- Weekly Benefits (average weekly income);
- Injury assistance benefits;
- Non-Medicare Medical and Out of Pocket Expenses;
- Overseas medical and additional expenses;
- Emergency travel assistance;
- Baggage and personal effects;
- Personal money, travellers' cheques and credit cards;
- Personal liability;
- Kidnap, ransom and extortion;
- Loss of Travel Deposits;
- Refund of excess following collision damage or theft
- Extra territorial cover;
- Environment and Natural Disaster Evacuation and Political Evacuation

For full cover details and exclusions refer to Council's current Personal Accident / Corporate Travel policy document available from the Governance Unit.

Council's policy of travel insurance provides for reimbursement of eligible claims for expenditures which are necessarily incurred for replacement of lost or stolen items. In circumstances where a person covered under Council's policy incurs a loss or theft of items whilst travelling, the loss or theft should be reported to the police or another appropriate independent and contactable party e.g. hotel management. Receipts for stolen items must be retained for submission to the insurer following the traveller's return to Australia. Councillors or employees should notify the Governance [and Risk Lead](#) of any incidents on their return.

## ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively, Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.

## REFERENCES

Local Government (General) Regulations 2015 R12(a) in reference to the keeping and maintain of an Overseas of Interstate Travel Register  
Local Government (Planning and Reporting) 2020  
Application for International & Interstate Travel Form  
Staff Training & Development Policy  
Councillor Training & Development Policy  
Staff Code of Conduct Policy  
Councillors Code of Conduct Policy  
Mobile Phone Policy  
Travel Register

## APPENDICES

Nil.