

Expenses, Reimbursements and Allowances Policy

July 2024

The following is the expenses regime for elected members of the Otago Regional Council.

Principles

- Reimbursement of expenses incurred is available where required by virtue of membership for Council and Committee meetings, workshops, consent hearings, Council approved representation and Council organised events, and Chair-approved constituency activity including invitations from constituency groups, or general Council invitations.
- Claims are to be made by Councillors in the GO Expense claim system (GO). Expense claims will not be automatically generated by staff. Claims will be approved by the General Manager Corporate Services.
- When an expense claim is submitted in GO the Councillor certifies that the expenses are incurred on legitimate Council business in accordance with Council policy, that the amounts were incurred and paid for by the Councillor and no claim for reimbursement of any sum will be made from another source for these costs.
- Travel shall be shared where practicable. Whereby virtue of private arrangements a Councillor chooses not to utilise Council provided or shared travel, expenses shall not be reimbursed.
- Accommodation and travel arrangements to be made through the Governance Support Officers or Executive Assistant Strategy and Customer.
- Basis of reimbursement is actual and reasonable.
- Claims are to be supported by itemised GST invoices / receipts.
- No alcohol can be claimed, with the exception being a Councillor required to do so as a hosting requirement and the expenditure is pre-approved by the Chairperson.
- Costs of spouse/partner accompaniment to be met privately.
- Where Council provided transport is available and not used, mileage allowance is not claimable.
- Claims for travel to be based on distance from normal residences, or such shorter distance as may be involved.
- Mileage is for travel in a private motor vehicle and by the most direct route that is reasonable in the circumstances.
- Travel time is to be by the quickest form of transport and most direct route that is reasonable in the circumstances.
- Claims should be made as soon as is practicable following the meeting or activity claimed for.

Specific Considerations

Hearing Fees

The amount payable to a Councillor who acts as Chair of a hearing panel is \$116 per hour. The amount payable to a Councillor who is a member of a hearing panel, but not the Chair, is \$93 per hour. Other conditions that apply to these payments including the hearings that apply and time that may be claimed are as determined by the Remuneration Authority.

Motor Vehicle Mileage Allowance

The maximum motor vehicle mileage allowance authorised by the Remuneration Authority will be paid for qualifying travel.

Travel Time Allowance

A travel time allowance as authorised by the Remuneration Authority will be paid for qualifying travel.

Communications

- iPads (or a similar device of Council's choice) will be supplied to each Councillor, with an appropriate data connection. Ownership is retained by the Council.
- An appropriate printer will be supplied on request for the use of each Councillor. Ownership is retained by Council. Cost of reasonable consumables for Council use to be met by the Council.
- Where a Councillor prefers to utilise their own equipment, allowances are available as per the Remuneration Authority's 2024/25 Determination. This equipment and internet connection must be of a standard acceptable to Council.
- A communication allowance of \$550 per annum will be paid as per the Remuneration Authority's 2024/25 Determination. This covers:
 - use of personal mobile phone equipment \$150,
 - use of a member's own mobile phone service (call and data costs) \$400.
- The communications allowance will be paid 6-monthly in arrears (in April and October).

Childcare allowance

A childcare allowance as authorised by the Remuneration Authority will be paid when a member is engaged on qualifying Council business. Claims are to be on an actual reimbursement basis and supported by itemised GST invoices / receipts.

Incidental Costs

Incidental costs such as accommodation, meals, parking, fares and other such costs incurred on Council business are recoverable on an actual and reasonable basis. Such claims are to be supported by itemised GST invoices / receipts and approved by the Chief Executive or General Manager Corporate Services. As stated in the Principles, it is Council's preference that accommodation and travel arrangements are booked by Council through the Governance Support Officers or Executive Assistant Governance, Culture and Customer.

Where a Councillor chooses to stay privately when otherwise Council provided accommodation would be provided, an allowance of \$65 per night is payable.

Unforeseen Expenses and Costs

Any unforeseen expenses or costs of any Councillor related to Council activities (except for constituency work which must be approved by the Chairperson) may be reimbursed at the discretion of the Chief Executive or General Manager Corporate Services.

Chairperson

In recognition of the Chairperson's wider Council role, the following additional entitlements are available:

- Provision of a Council vehicle in accordance with the Remuneration Authority's use formula.
- Provision of a cell phone including call and data costs (if this is taken up, the communications allowance outlined above is not applicable).
- Membership of Air New Zealand Koru Club.