



WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

COUNCILLORS
RESOURCES & FACILITIES POLICY
2020

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	Councillors Resources & Facilities Policy
Policy Type:	Council
Responsible Branch:	Corporate Strategies
Responsible Officer:	Director Corporate Strategies
Document Status:	Final
Adopted By:	Council
Adopted Date:	August 3, 2020
Review Date:	April 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This policy outlines the range of resources and facilities provided to support Councillors to enable them to effectively carry out their role.

Resources and facilities include the provision of communication and computer equipment; and opportunities to participate in professional development activities and networks relevant to local government and public sector governance.

The policy does not include the following:

- Out-of-pocket expenses, including private travel use – covered in separate Council Expenses Policy
- Allowances - set by determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal.

Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors.

This Policy is not intended to prescribe every possible situation that may arise. Should a situation arise that is not adequately covered by this policy, the matter will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer and if required to Council for determination by resolution.

References

Category	Document
Legislation	Local Government Act (Vic.) 2020
Council Related Policies & Procedures	Councillors Code of Conduct Council Expenses Policy Light Fleet Policy Election Period Policy Media Policy

2. POLICY

Principles

This Policy establishes the resources, administrative and professional development support to be provided to elected Councillors to enable them to carry out their duties as representatives of the community, communicate with each other, Council staff and the community.

The development of this Policy was guided by the following principles:

- Ensuring that all Councillors have available to them the tools, services and facilities necessary to undertake their roles;
- Councillors should not be out of pocket as a result of performing their Council functions and duties;
- Achieving best practice governance by supporting Councillors in skill development and knowledge of issues effecting the local government sector;
- Assisting Councillors to improve skills necessary to perform their role and function as Councillors on a group or individual basis;
- Payment for the support provided to Councillors must be accountable and transparent to the community.

3. RESOURCES and FACILITIES

Transport

The Council pool vehicles may be booked by a Councillor, subject to availability of a vehicle and the Council's Light Fleet Policy, for travel to/from official meetings, conferences, seminars, training and events.

- The conditions of use of the Council vehicles shall be in accordance with Council's "*Light Fleet Policy*".

Pool car travel arrangements will be made for Councillors attending relevant functions, where Council staff are attending.

Councillors will be provided with car parking permissions to park in the designated Council parking bays adjacent to the Civic Centre Offices when attending for Council business.

Information Technology and Communications

Councillors will be provided with the following information technology and communications equipment:

- A smartphone with voicemail facilities and hands free (Bluetooth) kit (if required). The account for this mobile telephone will be paid by the Council;
- A tablet/laptop computer/iPad with access to email and loaded with Council approved applications and anti-virus software;
- A suitable internet facility for the tablet/laptop/iPad;
- A multi-function colour printer/scanner/copier and fax device; and
- A case to protect the smartphone and tablet/iPad.

Councillors will be provided with a Warrnambool City Council (WCC) email address, which will be linked to the Council's electronic Mail (& Calendar) system to allow for diary management by the Chief Executive's office.

Council's IT department will provide support to Councillors for Council provided equipment and software.

Where a Councillor wishes to use their own equipment, full IT support may not be provided and/or expenses reimbursed by Council.

The configuration and use of Council provided IT and Communications equipment shall be in accordance with the *Councillors Information Technology and Communications Usage Standards* (Appendix 1).

Stationery & Printing

Standard stationery shall be provided to carry out Council duties, including but not limited to, diaries, notebooks and pens.

Paper will be supplied for the printer on an 'as needs basis'. For large documents and print jobs Councillors may contact the Chief Executive's office to arrange printing at the Civic Centre Offices.

Administrative Support

Relative to Council business, administrative support will be provided to Councillors through the Chief Executive's office. Staff will not provide non-Council business administrative services, run personal errands, or undertake non-Council business administrative tasks for Councillors.

Office Access & Meeting Rooms

Each Councillor will receive a security pass allowing access to the Councillors meeting room and public areas of the Civic Centre Offices during business operating hours. After hour arrangements shall be made and approved the Chief Executive's office.

A Councillors meeting room is provided at the Civic Centre Offices for Councillor briefing/meetings and civic functions as arranged by.

Other meeting rooms at the Civic Centre Offices can be booked (subject to availability) by Councillors for meetings associated with their role as a Councillor. Bookings are made through the Chief Executive's office.

Meals and Refreshments

The Council will provide reasonable refreshments during meetings on Council business and reasonable meals where Council or Committee meetings are to be held over extended periods or are likely to have a late conclusion time, at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer and/or Mayor.

The nature of the meal and refreshments shall depend on the nature of the meeting, the timing and attendees and all arrangements are made through the Chief Executive's office.

Protective Clothing

The Council shall, upon request, make available on loan protective clothing required to assist in carrying out the duties of office. This clothing is to be returned promptly upon the completion of the activity/duty for which the articles were required.

The clothing shall be limited to clothing held in store to meet the organisation's requirements.

Insurance

Councillors are covered by the following Council insurance policies while undertaking their Council duties.

- Public Liability
- Professional Indemnity
- Councillors and Officers Liability Insurance
- Personal Accident
- Motor Vehicle (while driving Council owned vehicles)
- Loss of No Claim Bonus/payment of excess in the event of an accident whilst using their own vehicle (subject to having comprehensive insurance), limit is \$1,000, no excess); and
- Loss or damage to personal property in excess of the policy excess
- Statutory Liability and Defence Costs Indemnity
- Cyber Risk

Council equipment provided to Councillors is covered for damage or theft under Council's insurance policies. Councillors are expected to exercise due care in protecting the equipment from damage or theft.

All policies have terms, conditions, exclusions and deductibles and specific information can be obtained by contacting the Manager Governance & Civic Support.

Council will pay any applicable policy excess in respect of claims made against a Councillor arising from Council business where any claim is accepted by Council's insurers.

WorkCover

A Councillor injured while carrying out their Council duties may be entitled to claim workers compensation under the *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013*.

Each workers compensation claim will be determined based on its individual circumstances and merit.

Councillors may make a workers compensation claim in accordance under *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013* and the relevant Council policies and procedures.

Legal Expenses

Other than by specific Council resolution or in accordance with a Council policy, any legal expenses incurred by a Councillor will be the responsibility of that Councillor.

Councillors may discuss potential claims on a case by case basis with the Chief Executive Officer to determine if any insurance claim is applicable.

The Council may, if requested, indemnify or reimburse the reasonable legal expenses of:

- a councillor defending an action arising from the performance in good faith of a function under the Local Government Act provided that the outcome of the legal proceedings is favourable to the councillor

- a councillor defending an action in defamation, provided the statements complained of were made in good faith in the course of exercising a function under the Act and the outcome of the legal proceedings is favourable to the councillor
- a councillor for proceedings before an appropriate investigative or review body, provided the subject of the proceedings arises from the performance in good faith of a function under the Act and the matter has proceeded past any initial assessment phase to a formal investigation or review and the investigative or review body makes a finding substantially favourable to the councillor.

In the case of a code of conduct complaint made against a councillor, legal costs will only be made available where the matter has been referred by the general manager to a conduct reviewer and the conduct reviewer has commenced a formal investigation of the matter and makes a finding substantially favourable to the councillor.

Legal expenses incurred in relation to proceedings arising out of the performance by a councillor of his or her functions under the Act are distinguished from expenses incurred in relation to proceedings arising merely from something that a councillor has done during his or her term in office. For example, expenses arising from an investigation as to whether a councillor acted corruptly would not be covered by this section.

The Council will not meet the legal costs:

- of legal proceedings initiated by a councillor under any circumstances;
- of a councillor seeking advice in respect of possible defamation, or in seeking a non-litigious remedy for possible defamation;
- for legal proceedings that do not involve a councillor performing their role as a councillor.

Reimbursement of expenses for reasonable legal expenses must have Council approval by way of a resolution of the Council prior to costs being incurred.

Other Support

Councillors will be supplied upon request with a copy of the Local Government Act, the Planning and Environment Act and any other appropriate legislation as requested but are encouraged to access the electronic versions of these documents from www.legislation.vic.gov.au.

Councillors will be provided with a Warrnambool City Council name badge for use while on Council business.

Mayoral Resources

In addition to the resources and facilities available to all Councillors, the Mayor will also be provided will:

- A furnished office with desktop computer connected to Council printers, a telephone, bookshelf and drawers; and
- Private use of a medium sized, executive vehicle with a five star safety rating, hands free (Bluetooth) kit and fuel card.

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Interstate and International Travel

All interstate and international travel undertaken by Councillors must be in accordance with the achievement of Council's corporate objectives and goals and be approved by a resolution of the Council.

For interstate travel the class of air travel is economy class. For international travel, the class of air travel is to be premium economy if available. Otherwise, the class of travel is to be economy. All air travel bookings and payment will be made by the Council.

A register disclosing the details and costs relating to all interstate and international travel undertaken by Councillors (with the exception of interstate travel by land for less than three days) is made available for public inspection.

Councillors undertaking any approved travel under this clause must ensure that the final details on the travel expenses are provided to the Manager Governance & Risk within seven days of return from travel.

Where a conference or seminar involves interstate or international travel, Councillors attending must provide a written report on their attendance. The report must be submitted to a Council meeting as soon as practicable.

4. DISABILITY and CARER SUPPORT

The Council encourages wide participation and interest in civic office. It will ensure council premises and associated facilities are accessible, including provision for sight or hearing impaired councillors and those with other disabilities.

For any Councillor with a disability, the Council will provide reasonable additional resources and facilities in order to allow that Councillor to perform his/her duties as a Councillor.

Councillors who are the principal carer of a child or other elderly, disabled and/or sick immediate family member will be entitled to reimbursement of carer's expenses, as set out in the Council Expenses Policy.

5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING

Councillor professional development is encouraged in order to develop and maintain Councillors' skills and abilities with regards to effective community representation, decision making and strategic Council planning.

Avenues for Councillors to utilise professional development opportunities include;

- Councillor Induction Program and regular in-house workshops arranged through the Chief Executive's office.
- Workshops, seminars, conferences, and other day training as offered by industry partners, local government networks and support organisations or participation in relevant formal study courses at appropriately recognised training facilities.
- Professional membership activities of peak Australian Local Government bodies and related organisations.

The costs associated with the Councillor Induction Program and in-house workshops will be borne by Council.

Access to professional development/training opportunities shall be at the discretion of each Councillor, who will be entitled to have paid (up to a set annual maximum allowance) the following professional development costs:

- Registration fees for attendance at conferences and seminars.
- Conference dinner/meals – payment for the main conference dinner if not covered by registration fee costs together with all meals within reasonable limits for the duration of the conference or seminar.
- Accommodation – appropriate accommodation from the day prior to registration day and each day on which the conference or seminar is held. Any additional costs as a result of the attendance of partners and/or children shall be borne by the Councillor.
- Transportation in the most appropriate mode to, from and during conferences and seminars. Car parking fees including airport and hotel parking.
- Professional Membership fees associated with any of the following bodies
 - Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)
 - Victorian Local Government Associations (VLGA)
 - Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)
 - Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA)
 - Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD)

The Mayor and/or delegated Councillor/s accompanied by the Chief Executive Officer will endeavour to regularly participate in the following key local government events, of which attendances costs will be covered by the Council:

- ALGA National General Assembly
- MAV Annual Session
- MAV Plenary Session

Notes:

- The professional development fund allocation is set at \$3,000 per annum per Councillor for skills development programs and topics at the discretion of each Councillor approved in accordance with this Policy.
 - The Chief Executive Officer shall assess and decide on all Councillor professional development applications.
 - If the Chief Executive Officer refuses the application the Councillor may request that the application be referred to the Council for review.
- An additional \$500 allowance is available per annum per Councillor exclusively for access to governance related professional development and/or memberships approved in accordance with this Policy.
- The annual allocation shall be subject to annual review as part of the Council budget approval process.

- Registration and payment for conferences, seminars and memberships shall be organised through the Chief Executive's office.
- Unused annual allocations will not be carried forward to the following year.
- The Council may resolve to approve a higher annual cost for requests to undertake a formal relevant qualification, such as a certificate, diploma, or relevant units of an undergraduate or postgraduate degree.
- Appendix 1 outlines a recommended yearly program and examples of options available for Councillors to consider over their four year electoral term.

6. GOVERNANCE

Review

The Manager Governance and Risk is responsible for undertaking a periodical review of the policy to ensure any changes required to strengthen or update the policy are made in a timely manner.

The policy must be submitted to the Council for review no later than no later than six months after a general election.

Compliance

The Director Corporate Strategies shall exercise an oversight function over compliance with this policy.

Where a Councillor fails to comply with this policy, the issue shall be dealt with in the same manner as disputes arising under the Councillor Code of Conduct.

Ownership of Property

All equipment provided under this Policy remains the property of the Council and must be returned to the Council at the end of a Councillor's term of office or upon retirement/resignation of the Councillor.

Should a Councillor desire to keep any equipment allocated by the Council, then the councillor may make application to the Chief Executive Officer to purchase any such equipment. The Chief Executive Officer will determine an agreed fair market price or written down value for the item of equipment. This option does not include motor vehicles.

APPENDIX 1 – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY and COMMUNICATIONS USAGE STANDARDS for COUNCILLORS

IT RESOURCES

- All laptops, tablets, iPads, mobile/smart phones and service numbers/addresses must be used in compliance with applicable licenses, notices, contracts and agreements.
- Councillors will be issued with a Council email address (.... @warrnambool.vic.gov.au). Due to the business email security requirements the address will not be linked to a personal email account.
- The email account will be linked to the Council's electronic Mail & Calendar to allow for diary management by the Chief Executive's office.
- The email account, internet access and web pages should not be used for any purpose other than Council/Councillor related communications.
- Any document received over the internet and by email is considered corporate information for which the Council is responsible. All corporate information must be appropriately registered through the Council's central records systems.
- The Council provided IT equipment and resources including email accounts, internet access and web pages must not be used for electioneering purposes. For further information refer to the *Election Period Policy*

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

- The confidentiality of correspondence via email cannot be guaranteed. Confidential emails should be sent with encryption or by traditional methods, not electronically.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND INFORMATION PRIVACY

- Freedom of Information, Privacy and Data Security legislation applies to all documents flowing through the organisation. This includes electronic documents received and produced through the internet and email.
- To maintain the original integrity of documents, no personal comments should be added or alterations made to the original document. Comments may be recorded on a separate memo, file note, or electronic copy, which can be separate from the original document.

COMMUNICATIONS

- All communications produced by Councillors contribute to the community's perception of Council's image. This includes internet and email communications, which must conform to organisational standards to project the public image desired by Council. For further information refer to the *Media Policy and Councillor Code of Conduct*.

SECURITY & MONITORING

- Use of the internet and email may be subject to monitoring for security or network management reasons. Councillors may also be subject to limitations on their use of such resources.

- Councillors must not share Council issued internet or email access or passwords with any other person. Each Councillor is responsible for all activity that takes place under his or her Council login.
- The distribution of any information through the internet, computer-based services, email and messaging systems is subject to the scrutiny of the Council. The Council reserves the right to determine the suitability of this information.
- Councillors must not download or transmit executable programs, screensavers, system components (e.g. fonts, patches) graphics, pictures, movies, audio files or similar files, without approval from the Manager Information Services.
- All internet and email use is monitored and results are reported to the Chief Executive Officer.

PERSONAL USE

- Council provided internet and email privileges, like telephones, computer systems and networks, are considered corporate resources and are provided primarily for work purposes.
- Notwithstanding, limited personal use of the equipment is permitted. The Chief Executive Officer must approve (in advance) any use in excess of limited personal usage, as well as any arrangements to reimburse Council.

LOST, STOLEN OR MISPLACED EQUIPMENT

- For security purposes and to avoid misuse of equipment after loss, the service must be cancelled immediately once it is determined missing.
- The theft or loss should be reported to the nearest police station and the Chief Executive's office must be contacted immediately in order to have the service barred.

USE OF MOBILE/SMART PHONES WHILST DRIVING

- Mobile phones should not be used in any case when operating a vehicle. The user should safely park the vehicle before taking or making a call.

CARE OF EQUIPMENT

- Key tips on care of equipment include:
 - Keep the equipment dry – take care around liquids
 - Keep the equipment out of extreme cold or heat.
 - Do not attempt to open the housing, except to replace the battery according to User Guide instructions.
 - To clean, wipe only with a soft cloth slightly dampened in a mild-soap-and-water solution.
 - Handle the SIM card and all other components with care

GENERAL CONDITIONS

- A case is provided to protect the tablet/iPad/smart phone from damage.
- With regard to use of internet and email, Councillors should not:
 - Visit internet sites that contain obscene, hateful or other objectionable materials; send or receive any material that is obscene or defamatory or which is intended to

- annoy, harass or intimidate another person or which contravenes the Equal Opportunity principles.
- Receive email without following records management procedures.
 - Produce communications over the internet that do not conform to organisational standards. Solicit emails that are unrelated to business activities.
 - Make or post indecent remarks, proposals, or materials.
 - Upload, download, or otherwise transmit commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to parties outside of the Council, or the Council itself.
 - Reveal or publicise confidential or proprietary information which includes, but is not limited to financial information, new business and product ideas, marketing strategies and plans, databases and the information contained therein, customer lists, technical product information, computer software source codes, computer/network access codes, and business relationships.
 - Examine, change or use another person's files, output or user for which they do not have explicit authorisation.
- Councillors must report immediately to the Chief Executive's office any incorrect or inappropriate communications transmitted and or received.

APPENDIX 2 - COUNCILLOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Conferences, seminars and training courses are organised throughout the year by Council, local government related organisations, professional bodies and private sector providers on issues and events which may be relevant to the role of a Councillor.

The selection of conferences and training should be based on its relevance to the responsibilities and the specific training needs of a Councillor and Council's Council Plan goals and are likely to encompass but not limited to:

- Sessions organised by Local Government peak bodies including the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA), the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) and the Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA).
- Specialist training related to the duties, responsibilities and competencies of a Councillor as organised by the Chief Executive's office.
- Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) or other courses approved by the Chief Executive related to governance and leadership.
- Sessions conducted in-house as part of Council's annual Councillor training program, briefings and workshops.
- Specific needs based training as approved by the Chief Executive, including, but not limited to media and public speaking.

Suggested Training Options:

Councillors are open to select their own professional development training program. The following is provided for illustrative/guidance purposes only.

Year	Professional Development/Training Program
One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCC Councillor Induction program • MAV Mayoral Workshop (as appropriate) • MAV/VLGA new Councillor & Councillor development short courses e.g. Meeting Procedures • Australian Institute Company Director's Course • Diploma of Governance (Local Government) • WCC (in-house) Councillor learning and development workshops e.g. Media training, Team Building, Financial Management and Budgets, Conflict of Interest, Local Government/Planning & Environment Acts
Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAV Mayoral Workshop • Chairing of Meetings/Meeting Procedures • Australian Institute Company Director's Course • Diploma of Governance (Local Government) • WCC (in-house) Councillor learning and development workshops • MAV, VLGA or Australian Institute of Company Directors, short courses or specific workshops as relevant.

Year	Professional Development/Training Program
Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MAV Mayoral Workshop• Australian Institute Company Director's Course• Diploma of Governance (Local Government)• WCC (in-house) Councillor learning and development workshops• MAV, VLGA or Australian Institute of Company Directors, short courses or specific workshops as relevant.
Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WCC (in-house) Councillor learning and development workshops• MAV, VLGA or Australian Institute of Company Directors, short courses or specific workshops as relevant.