



Elected Members' Allowances and Reimbursement Policy 2022-25

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1. Introduction

This policy sets out rules on the claiming of expenses by elected members and the resources that will be available to them during their term of office.

The contact person for queries is Allie Dunn, Manager – Democracy Services, email allie.dunn@tararua.govt.nz, phone 06 3744080, 027 333 1626.

2. Documentation of Policies

The contents of this policy form the basis of the document, and it includes details of the procedures established for the payment of such allowances and expenses.

It applies to the elected members of the Tararua District Council, Dannevirke Community Board and the Eketahuna Community Board.

3. Authentication of Expense Reimbursements and Allowances

From time-to-time elected members incur expenses on the Council’s/Community Board’s behalf, which need to be reimbursed. This reimbursement and the use of supplied resources apply only to elected members personally, and only while they are acting in their official capacity.

Costs for expenses must have a justifiable business purpose, be moderate and conservative having regard to the circumstances, and be appropriate in all respects. Transparency is achieved through disclosure in the Annual Report setting out the remuneration and value of other non-financial benefits received by, or payable to the Mayor, Councillors and Community Board members. This information is subject to scrutiny by Audit New Zealand.

The process for reimbursement of claims includes the following principles:

- Any expenses to be reimbursed must be on an actual and reasonable basis and in line with Council policy;
- Expense claims are approved by the Manager – Democracy Services, and full original receipts are required;
- Cost reimbursements will be made via the payroll system.

In the case of one-off expenditure such as travel to conferences, the process and prior approvals required are detailed in this policy.

In the case of vehicle mileage, travel time and communications, all limits set in this document are in accordance with and do not exceed the Remuneration Authority’s Determination.

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The Council’s internal audit work programme includes sampling expense claims and allowances paid to elected members and staff.

All expenditure that falls under this policy is approved on the condition that it can be met within relevant budget provisions.

Attendance at conferences/seminars/training programmes by elected members is fully paid by the Council, and its purpose must contribute to their development, knowledge and abilities to carry out the responsibilities and workloads relating to their positions of office.

4. Definitions

“Actual” means as evidenced by the original receipt attached to the claim form.

“Reasonable” means that it is within the amount specified by this policy or as deemed reasonable by the Mayor/Board Chairperson and/or Chief Executive.

"Council/Community Board business" includes: formal council and community board meetings, committee meetings, workshops, portfolio and appointed roles, conferences, seminars, statutory hearings, training courses, tours, site visits, meetings with staff, meetings with organisations and community groups, meetings with members of the public.

It does not include events where the primary focus is on social activity.

"Remuneration Authority" is an independent body established by the Remuneration Authority Act 1977, with responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2002 to determine remuneration and expense/allowance rules for local authority members.

5. Allowances and Expenses of Elected Members

Mayor

The Mayor will be provided with a vehicle on a full private use basis.

A deduction will be made from the Mayor’s salary as determined by the Remuneration Authority relative to the value of the personal benefit received, and the Mayor cannot claim for vehicle-kilometre reimbursement.

A mobile phone is made available for the Mayor’s use, with full payment of the rental and associated call charges paid by the Council.

The Mayor holds a credit card to pay directly any expenses incurred while carrying out Council business. Full receipts and details of all such expenditure are verified and accounted for through the Chief Executive’s office.

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Vehicle-kilometre Allowance - Councillors and Community Board Members

All elected members (except the Mayor) are entitled to claim a vehicle-kilometre allowance in the form of a per kilometre rate to offset the cost of running the member’s own vehicle in the following circumstances:

1. When travelling in the course of any business of the Council/Community Board relative to the elected members position, and as generally detailed within the definitions section of this policy;
2. When travelling on Council/Community Board business in order that the member may make himself or herself more familiar with the business of the Council/Community Board;
3. All such travel must be made by the most direct route reasonable in the circumstances;
4. Mileage will be paid at the maximum rate per kilometre as set out in the current Remuneration Authority Determination;
5. The maximum vehicle mileage allowance payable to anyone elected member in a financial year shall be determined in accordance with the guidelines of the Remuneration Authority;

Such travel involves travelling within the district, the region and outside of the district on official business in other towns and cities;

6. All such claims from elected members for the payment of vehicle mileage allowances shall be submitted in writing to the Manager – Democracy Services for processing in accordance with this policy and as approved by the Remuneration Authority.

Travel Time Allowance – Councillors and Community Board Members

1. All elected members (except the Mayor who is recognised as being a full-time member) are entitled to claim a travel time allowance for eligible travel by the member to and from the member’s residence in undertaking their duties and responsibilities.
2. Such travel must be carried out by the quickest form of transport reasonable in the circumstances.
3. The travel time allowance is \$40.00 for each hour of eligible travel time after the first hour of eligible travel time travelled in a day.

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4. However, if a member of a local authority permanently or temporarily resides outside the local authority area, and travels the local authority area on local authority business, the member is only eligible for a travel time allowance for eligible travel:
 - a. after the member crosses the boundary of the local authority area; and
 - b. after the first hour of eligible travel within the local authority area.
5. The maximum total amount of travel time allowance that a member may be paid for eligible travel in a 24-hour period is 8 hours.

ICT (Communications) Allowances

1. The Mayor and Councillors will each be provided with a tablet / iPad device set up with programmes necessary to receive meeting agendas and other information, and an official Tararua District Council email address for sending and receiving Council business related email communications.
2. Full technical support is provided by Council for the device and systems provided for Council business related use.
3. Councillors may claim an allowance in accordance with the following limits set by the Remuneration Authority for use of own equipment / services:
 - Use of multi-functional or other printer: \$50 pa
 - Use of ICT consumables: \$200 pa
 - Use of a mobile phone: \$200 pa
 - Mobile connection: \$500 pa
 - Internet connection: \$800 pa

Expenses – Mayor, Councillors and Community Board Members

1. An elected member may be reimbursed for expenses incurred so long as the reimbursement is in line with Council policy and on an actual and reasonable basis;
2. The general types of expenses that may be paid or reimbursed to elected members include accommodation, food, travel and parking fees;
3. Such costs may be claimed by an elected member if they are required to travel long distances (in excess of 100 kilometres) to a meeting or event and it is not practicable

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to return home on the same day. This applies particularly if meetings are being held at the same venue on consecutive days;

4. As the Council has negotiated corporate rates with accommodation providers in various towns and cities such accommodation requirements will generally be arranged through the Chief Executive's office by the staff member nominated for this purpose;
5. Costs such as laundry, alcohol or mini-bar, newspapers etc will not be refunded;
6. Elected members who choose to make their own arrangements to stay private will be reimbursed for receipted actual expenses, provided such costs do not exceed those that would have been incurred through accommodation providers referred to in clause 4 above;
7. All air travel bookings shall be made through the Chief Executive's office by the staff member nominated for this purpose, and will be by economy class unless exceptional circumstances arise;
8. Any claims for expenses of the nature as outlined in this policy shall be submitted in writing by the elected member to the Manager – Democracy Services and must include a receipt from the supplier of the service setting out the details and the amount of the actual costs incurred;
9. From the time to time the Mayor, Councillors and Community Board members may have unforeseen costs arise for general items related to community events. Such expenditure will be reimbursed on an actual and reasonable basis, and claims must be submitted in writing through the Chief Executive's office. The items should be appropriate to the occasion and the expenditure should be moderate and conservative.

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