

Hospitality, Travel and Recognition Expenses Policy

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Responsible Division	Corporate - People and Safety
Related Documents	Code of Conduct for Employees Procurement Policy Risk Management Policy Corporate Credit Card Procedure Employee Conflict of Interest Policy Training and Development Procedure Recognition Procedure Council Members Allowances, Benefits, Support and Facilities Policy
Applicable Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 1999</i> <i>Independent Commissioner Against Corruption (ICAC) Act 2012</i> <i>Public Interest Disclosure Act 2018</i> <i>Ombudsman Act 1972</i> <i>South Australian Municipal Salaried Officers Award</i> <i>Local Government Employees Award</i> <i>Alexandrina Council South Australian Municipal Salaried Officers Agreement</i> <i>Alexandrina Council and Local Government Employees Award Enterprise Agreement</i>

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy provides guidance on appropriate hospitality, travel and recognition expenditure for employees to ensure good governance with accountable and responsible financial expenditure.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Alexandrina Council employees and relates to situations in which council officers provide hospitality and/or catering for events as well as to external stakeholders of the Council.
- 2.2 This policy also applies to all employees seeking approval for hospitality related expenses to all functions/events held on Council premises or another venue.
- 2.3 This policy does not apply to Council's Employee Social Club (which is self-funded by employees).
- 2.4 Functions where Employees are receiving entertainment or hospitality from third parties must be considered in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Employees and the requirements of section 119A of the *Local Government Act 1999*, which outlines obligations relating to gifts and benefits.

- 2.5 Where there are any queries over items not specifically covered in this policy, employees should obtain approval from their relevant Manager prior to entering into any arrangements or incurring expenditure.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

Act refers to the *Local Government Act 1999*.

Business Activity refers to any task, engagement, or duty undertaken by a Council employee or representative that directly relates to the operational, administrative, or strategic functions of the Council. This includes meetings, training, workshops, site inspections, and other activities where the primary purpose is the conduct of official Council business, either internally or with external stakeholders.

CEO refers to the Chief Executive Officer.

CFO refers to the Chief Financial Officer.

Community Engagement event means a structured community event which is authorised as part of an approved project or program. Examples include arts and youth events and community consultation activities to assist in Council's decision making.

Community Event means a public event or ceremony hosted by Council that celebrates community. Examples include, Australia Day, Australian Citizenship Ceremony, Gallery Openings.

Council Officer means an Employee who is authorised by Council to perform a function, exercise a delegation or make a decision under this policy.

Credit Cards mean any type of corporate or organisational purchasing card, including credit, debit, EFTPOS and similar bank cards used for purchasing on behalf of the Council.

Employee means any person employed or engaged by Council, or who carries out work for or on behalf of Council, in any capacity. This includes people employed directly by Council on a full-time, part-time, casual, permanent, fixed-term, temporary or contractual basis, as well as apprentices, trainees, secondees, volunteers, work experience students, contractors, subcontractors, employees of contractors or subcontractors, labour hire workers, consultants, other authorised personnel, and any other person providing services to, or on behalf of, Council, whether or not they are employed by another party.

Entertainment means items such as tickets to movies, plays, sporting events, theatre, recreational activities, restaurant meals, holiday airline tickets, tickets to an amusement centre (Note: this reference is taken from the Australian Taxation Office FBT guidelines).

Gift to employee means items that are not ordinarily required to undertake a role (and are beyond approved employment conditions) such as movie tickets, gift cards, wine, Christmas hampers, bottles of alcohol, gift vouchers, perfume, flowers, pen sets (Note: this reference is taken from the Australian Taxation Office FBT guidelines).

Hospitality means the activity of providing food (i.e., catering), drinks (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) or entertainment.

Light refreshment includes tea, coffee, other non-alcoholic beverages, a light snack (i.e., morning tea or afternoon tea).

Meeting refers to any scheduled gathering of employees, elected members, or external parties to discuss Council-related matters. Meetings are typically formal or semi-formal in nature and may include briefings, committee meetings, stakeholder discussions, or team updates.

Networking Event A networking event is a function or gathering designed to build and strengthen professional relationships, facilitate knowledge exchange, and promote collaboration among employees, stakeholders, industry peers, or community members. This includes events such as awards dinners, gala nights, industry receptions, and similar functions.

Prescribed Meeting means a meeting of the Council or Council committee, or an Information Session, Workshop, Briefing, Training or similar activity which is directly or closely related to the performance or discharge of the roles or duties of the Council Members.

Professional Development refers to any approved structured learning or development activity, course, or program attended or conducted by Council employees for the purpose of building skills, knowledge, or competencies relevant to their role or professional growth. This includes internal or external workshops, seminars, conferences, inductions, or certification programs that support operational needs, compliance, or strategic priorities of the Council. These can also include Team Building/Team Planning activities.

Recognition Acknowledging or rewarding employees for their contributions, achievements, or service.

Third party means a person/entity who is not an employee of Council including clients, suppliers, contractors, community members or customers.

Travel Expenses Costs incurred by an employee for approved work-related travel, including transport, accommodation, meals, and incidentals.

Volunteer Event means an annual event to celebrate and acknowledge Council's Volunteers contributions.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 Purchasing Principles

- 4.1.1 Alexandrina Council's aim is to have a financially sound Council that is accountable, responsible and sustainable. This is to be achieved with the delivery of good governance across Council business.
- 4.1.2 The provision of hospitality, gifts, transport, accommodation and associated expenditure can be a part of conducting any business. As a result, provisions are made within Council's budget for such expenditure. All Council expenditure is reviewed as part of the Council's budget setting framework and is subject to public scrutiny.
- 4.1.3 All Council expenditure on hospitality, gifts, transport, accommodation and associated expenditure needs to be within the approved Council budget, be

approved within Council's endorsed delegations and authorisation framework and in accordance with Council's *Procurement Policy*.

- 4.1.4 Where credit cards are used as the payment method, expenditure must also be in accordance with Council's *Procurement Policy* and *Corporate Credit Card Procedure*.
- 4.1.5 The expense must be reasonable for the circumstances, and publicly defensible.
- 4.1.6 The expense must be for approved business activities only.
- 4.1.7 The expense must be properly documented with appropriate authorisations, retention of tax invoices and receipts and in line with relevant Council policies and procedures.
- 4.1.8 The acceptance of personal reward or loyalty points as a result of the expenditure of Council funds is not acceptable if undertaken with the use of a Council issued credit card.
- 4.1.9 The reimbursement of certain expenses incurred by employees in performing or discharging official functions and duties may be approved on case-by-case basis by the relevant Manager.
- 4.1.10 Employees who do not apply for approval of expenses prior to incurring the charge carry their own risk that it may be considered a private and not a work-related expense, and consequently, may be personally liable for the cost.

4.2 Permissible / non-permissible expenditure

- 4.2.1 The following tables outline types of permissible and non-permissible expenditure, expenditure limits and the approval required. Each item has been aligned to the relevant definition from Section 3 to assist in interpreting the appropriate application. These should be read in conjunction with the purchasing principles in section 4.1.

Permissible Expenditure

Category	Permissible Expenditure Type	Funded	Expenditure Limit & Approval Required
Business Activity	General carparking fees related to a business activity	✓	Within relevant budget. Approval: Manager
Business Activity / Community Engagement / Community Event	Community gifts, prizes, ceremonial or gratitude gifts to external parties.	✓	Up to \$75pp (excl. delivery charges): Approval: CEO Over \$75pp: Council Resolution Required

Category	Permissible Expenditure Type	Funded	Expenditure Limit & Approval Required
Business Activity / Community Event / Volunteer Event	Use of external venues. Priority is to be given to utilising Council owned facilities When choosing a non-Council venue, consideration should be given to ensuring it is appropriate for the type of function, it is cost effective, it meets community expectation for that type of event and should be located in the Council area wherever possible in order to support a local business	✓	Within relevant budget. Approval: General Manager
Hospitality	Alcohol provided as part of a Community Event	✓	Within relevant budget. Approval: CEO
Hospitality	Catering at meetings with service providers/external stakeholders (e.g. for advocacy or strategic relationship building)	✓	Max \$35pp. Approval: General Manager
Hospitality	General refreshments at Council facilities for Employees restricted to tea, instant coffee, milk and sugar.	✓	Within relevant budget. Approval: Budget Owner
Hospitality	Hospitality for the Annual Volunteer Event (incl. alcohol).	✓	Within relevant budget. Approval: CEO
Hospitality	Meal for employees attending Prescribed Meetings ≥ 3 hours outside normal hours.	✓	Max \$35pp. Approval: General Manager
Hospitality	Provision of catering for Community Events	✓	Within relevant budget. Approval: Budget Owner
Hospitality	Provision of catering for Professional Development activities	✓	Max \$35pp. Approval: General Manager

Category	Permissible Expenditure Type	Funded	Expenditure Limit & Approval Required
Hospitality	Team catering at council officer retirements/farewells (≥ 10 years of service with Alexandrina Council)	✓	Max \$5.80pp, cap \$100. Approval: General Manager
Hospitality / Travel Expenses	Gratuities and tips which are levied by the provider	✓	Within relevant budget. Approval: Manager
Networking Event	Tickets for Networking Events	✓	Within relevant budget. As per ticket price. Approval: Manager
Professional Development	Approved Professional Development activities	✓	Within relevant budget. Approval: Manager
Recognition	Approved organisation wide or department wide recognition morning or afternoon tea when aligned to strategic outcomes of Council, and within approved budgets and expenditure limits and in line with Recognition Procedure	✓	Max. \$5.80pp (CPI indexed). Approval: General Manager
Recognition	Service certificate, plaque, lapel pin or medal for 20+ years of service	✓	Within relevant budget. Approval: General Manager
Travel Expenses	Approved alternative transport (e.g. taxi, rideshare) for business activity	✓	Within relevant budget. Approval: Manager
Travel Expenses	General travel and associated expenses	✓	Within relevant budget. Approval: General Manager

Category	Permissible Expenditure Type	Funded	Expenditure Limit & Approval Required
Travel Expenses	Overnight accommodation and expenses incurred (including meals) for Council business activity	✓	Within relevant budget. Approval: General Manager

Non-Permissible Expenditure

Category	Non-Permissible Expenditure Type	Funded
Accommodation	Accommodation for Networking Events or non-business activity functions.	✗
Business Activity	Gratuities and tips over and above the amount charged by the provider.	✗
Business Activity	Membership subscriptions for airline clubs or loyalty programs	✗
Entertainment	Entertainment not related to a business activity.	✗
Gift to employee	Club memberships, gift cards, loyalty programs for employees.	✗
Gift to employee	Gifts or flowers for employees.	✗
Hospitality	Alcohol for business or social purposes, excluding Community events.	✗
Hospitality	Expenses on meals/non-alcoholic beverages above the prescribed limit.	✗
Hospitality	Purchase of alcohol for employees. However, employees may supply alcohol in limited circumstances, with prior approval from the CEO. Responsible Service of Alcohol requirements apply.	✗
Hospitality	Regular team or 1:1 meetings, including those held in coffee shops	✗
Travel Expenses	Alcohol, in-room movies, minibar and other similar private expenses.	✗
Travel Expenses	Costs already covered via payroll (e.g. km reimbursement, meal allowance, pool vehicle provided).	✗
Travel Expenses	Travel expenses for any person who is not a Council employee	✗
Travel Expenses	Travel expenses not related to a business activity	✗
Travel Expenses	Traffic or parking infringements	✗

- 4.1.1 In some circumstances and only with prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer, families of employees may be asked to attend official functions where their presence is clearly necessary for the success of the function or where the party to be entertained is to be accompanied by a family member (e.g., functions on weekends, where guests/dignitaries are being entertained and families/partners are attending, recognition of service functions, significant corporate events sponsored or organised by the Council where guests accompanied by their families/partners will be attending as guests of the Council).

5. Accommodation and Travel

- 5.1 Accommodation will be covered for all approved interstate/international Professional Development.
- 5.2 Generally, for one-day Professional Development activities, accommodation will not be provided unless there are documented Work Health and Safety (WHS) consideration. Approval must be given by the General Manager.
- 5.3 For a multi-day Professional Development activities, accommodation may be provided where documented WHS considerations apply. Approval must be given by the General Manager.
- 5.4 Accommodation expenses will not be covered for attendance at Networking events, or other non-business activity related functions.
- 5.5 When choosing accommodation, employees must choose the lowest rate available at suitable accommodation within a reasonable distance from the main location of the business activity.
- 5.6 Travel expenses should be as economical and efficient as is reasonably possible (e.g., economy class), where time and availability allow, with any upgraded travel services over and above the economy rate being incurred solely by the employee at their own expense.

6. Gifts

- 6.1 Employees must abide by the Code of Conduct for Employees and ensure compliance with section 119A of the *Local Government Act 1999*, which governs the acceptance of gifts or benefits from third parties. This includes adhering to any reporting requirements into the Employee Gifts and Benefits Register, ensuring transparency and accountability in accordance with legislative obligations.

7. Authorisation by the CEO

- 7.1 The CEO will maintain ultimate discretion to determine where and when it is appropriate to provide an exemption from this policy. Any variation to this policy must be in writing and document the reason for the variation to this policy prior to the purchase.

8. Availability of Policy

- 8.1 This Policy will be available for inspection at Council's principal office during ordinary business hours and on the Council's website www.alexandrina.sa.gov.au. Copies will also be provided to interested members of the community upon request, and upon payment of a fee in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.