

1.15 Council Member Travel

Objective

To establish appropriate financial controls over Corporate Travel and to ensure the appropriate management of travel risk, to ensure the Shire meets its duty of care.

Definitions

Best Fare of the Day means the lowest fare that exists in the marketplace at the time of booking and for which a seat is available, that meets the business requirements of the Traveller.

Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Determination means the Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members Determination in force at the time.

The Act means the *Local Government Act 1995*.

The Regulations means the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*.

Travel Approver means the Chief Executive Officer for all travel with the exception of international travel, which must be approved by Council.

Traveller means the Council Member approved to undertake travel.

Scope

This policy applies to travel by Council Members of the Shire of East Pilbara where the travel costs are paid directly by the Shire or by reimbursement. This policy does not apply to any Council Member's private travel.

As far as it is practicable and consistent with the relevant legislation and Council policies, this policy will apply to the purchasing of travel for Council members by the Shire.

Who can Travel?

1. Council Members may travel in accordance with the relevant Council policies, Regulations and Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members Determination as amended from time to time.
2. Council Members may undertake travel for the Shire as is considered appropriate for their role. This travel may include attending meetings of Council and its committees, professional development and training, product or site inspections, conferences, public relations opportunities or business development.
3. All travel by Council Members must provide a benefit to the Shire and its community.
4. Council Members Travel approval is requested and assessed through the completion of a Travel booking request form, which is subject to acceptance by the authorised Travel approver.

Approval of Travel

5. Travel by Council Members, outside of the Shire and Pilbara Regions which involves either:
 - a. Air travel

- b. Road travel using Shire vehicles
- c. Overnight accommodation
- d. Car Hire

must be requested using a Travel Booking Request Form and approved by the authorised Travel Approver prior to any booking being made.

6. The following aspects of travel will be considered in determining whether approval is granted:
- a. purpose of travel
 - b. estimated travel costs
 - c. duration of travel
 - d. impact on Shire operations
 - e. expected value generated by the travel.
7. The travel may be accepted or rejected at the sole discretion of the authorised Travel Approver.

Flights

8. Flights will be booked using the Best Fare of the Day which shall be reasonably determined by taking into consideration:
- a. airline scheduling including departure and arrival times, overall travel time and transit location(s).
 - b. the ability to provide suitable connecting flights.
 - c. price, taking into account relevant service costs that are included/excluded from the published fare (e.g., meal, baggage allowance).
 - d. fare conditions including cancellation or change fees and other potential costs; and
 - e. the need to accompany another traveller whose itinerary has been booked and it is most practical for them to travel together.
9. Travel will be purchased through the Shire's contracted Travel Agent.
10. Airline preferences, lounge membership, airline reward programs and preferences of accompanying family members will not be considerations in determining the Best Fare of the day for the traveller.
11. Business Class travel may be permitted where approved by the Chief Executive Officer in exceptional circumstances, which are limited to:
- a. there being no other practical flight available; or
 - b. the traveller has a medical certificate or disability affecting their travel requirements; and
 - c. there is sufficient budget to cover the cost of the travel.
12. Travellers may choose to upgrade to higher class of travel than at their own expense.

13. Amendments to ticketed airfares must be kept to a minimum. That is, bookings are only to be made once itinerary requirements are reasonably firm. Amendments are subject to cancellation fee, fare and airline differences.
14. The purchase of a flexible fare may be permissible in circumstances such as dates of meetings possibly changing subject to budget and travel approver, noting that these fares are often more expensive than regular fare.
15. Any amendment to approved travel is to be approved again by the Travel Approver. However, in exceptional circumstances that do not allow approval to be obtained in time, the traveller may amend a booking directly with the provider, provided they have the financial authority to do so and must notify the Travel Approver at the first opportunity.
16. Where a Council Member resides or works outside of the District but within Western Australia, the Shire will meet the costs of a return economy airfare to travel from their home or place of work to attend a Meeting, where this is the most practical and economical means of travel in accordance with the Council Member Allowances and Expenses Policy. The Shire will not meet the costs of partners or family members to accompany the Council Member.
17. Where a Council Member or a person in their direct care is outside the district and within Australia for ongoing medical treatment, the Shire will meet the cost of a return economy airfare to travel from their place of medical treatment to attend a Meeting, where this is the most practical and economical means of travel in accordance with the Council Member Allowances and Expenses Policy.
18. The Shire will meet the costs of commercial travel for Council Members travelling on approved business of the Council, including but not limited to training, advocacy and other meetings and events as approved by the Chief Executive Officer.
19. While bookings should where practicable be made through the Shire, a Council Member will be reimbursed for the actual cost of an economy class airfare booked by the Council Member, in accordance with the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Determination and the Council Member Allowances and Expenses Policy. Bookings may be made through the Shire.
20. Frequent flyer points are not to be accrued when travelling on the official business of Council.

Special Requests

21. If a Council Member wishes to travel with pets, the Council Member must meet the expense for the transportation of their pets – the Shire will not cover any cost.
22. Requests for mobility assistance, including the transport of wheel chairs and other mobility aids must be entered in the Travel Form prior to booking. Costs will be met by the Shire.
23. Excess luggage costs may be approved by the Chief Executive Officer prior to booking. Excess luggage must be for the purposes of Official Business only.

Travel by charter plane

24. The Shire will meet the cost of travel by air charter by Council Members subject to approval by the Chief Executive Officer in exceptional circumstances, where no practical alternative is in place or where it is unsafe to travel by any other means in accordance with the Council Member Allowances and Expenses Policy.

Accommodation

25. Accommodation will be arranged and paid for by the Shire in accordance with the Council Member Allowances and Expenses Policy, if the Council Member is required to travel for the following purposes:
- a. Attendance at an approved Meeting or Event; or
 - b. Attendance at approved training, advocacy and other meetings and events as approved by the Chief Executive Officer; or
 - c. Where the Council Member has travelled by road in excess of 100km to attend an approved Meeting or Event. For travel in excess of five (5) hours by road, accommodation at an intermediate stop where available, will be arranged and paid for by the Shire on request.
26. Incidental expenses will not be covered by the Shire.

Meals

27. The cost of meals for Council Member undertaking taking in accordance with the Council Member Allowances and Expenses policy will be met by the Shire.
28. The Shire will not meet the cost of alcoholic beverages unless approved by the Shire President or Chief Executive Officer.

Car Hire

29. Shire vehicles should be used where available.
30. Car hire will be booked on the basis of best fare of the day and suitability for the intended travel.

Use of Private Motor Vehicle

31. Where a private motor vehicle is used, reimbursement of travelling expenses is calculated for the shortest distance between the origin and destination in accordance with the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Determination and Council Member Allowances and Expenses Policy.
32. If the shortest possible route uses gravel roads, and the road conditions are unsafe (due to adverse weather for instance), the Council Member may take a longer route via bitumen roads, and will be reimbursed for the actual kilometres travelled to the extent permitted above.
33. In accordance with section 5.98(6)(b) of the Act, the Shire cannot reimburse any costs incurred for any repairs or servicing to a private motor vehicle, arising from its use for Council related travel.
34. All claims for the reimbursement of the use of private motor vehicles must be supported by evidence of odometer readings immediately before departure and immediately upon arrival at the destination.

Other Travel Expenses and Acquittal

35. Travel expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with the Act and the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Determination and Council Member Allowances and Expenses policy.
36. Council Members will also be responsible for the acquittal of their travel and to provide photographs of their before and after odometer readings as evidence to support claims for reimbursement of costs

of using a private motor vehicle.

37. The Chief Executive Officer is authorised to develop Travel Booking and Travel Acquittal Forms, to be completed by Council Members to ensure the payment of expenses comply with the Shire's Integrity Framework, the statutory and policy framework, and best audit practice.

Place of residence or work

38. If the Council Member does not live or work in the local government district, actual travel costs will be reimbursed from the person's usual place of residence or work and back to the extent permitted by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Determination from the Council Member's place of residence or work to the meeting and back; or if the distance travelled referred to above, is more than 100 kilometres, for the person to travel from the outer boundary of an adjoining local government district to the meeting and back to that boundary.
39. Advice of any changes in a Council Member's place of residence or work should be provided to the Shire.
40. Reimbursement of expenses for the Council members is to be approved by the Chief Executive Officer, with claims to be supported by receipts or other evidence.
41. All council members must complete a travel acquittal within 14 days of travel taken.

Private Travel

42. A traveller may request to include private travel in their Shire itinerary provided:
- a. the Shire shall not pay for any accommodation, transportation or reimburse any expenses associated with the private portion of the travel;
 - b. the private component of the travel does not impact on any aspect of the business travel including, but not limited to, itinerary, choice of airline, choice of accommodation or general standard of travel; and
 - c. the Shire will fund no more than the cost of the travel had the Best Fare of the Day not included the private travel.
 - d. Council Members will make their own arrangements for private part of travel.

Risk Management

43. The Shire will provide sufficient travel insurance. Travellers are responsible for not undertaking activities that would invalidate the insurance.
44. When traveling, the traveller will carry the telephone number of the Shire's emergency travel service provider and will contact the provider when experiencing a medical, safety or security emergency.
45. Travel will be undertaken using reputable service providers and safe means of transportation relative to the route and destination.
46. Travel to a destination with an alert level of "do not travel" or "reconsider your need to travel" as assigned by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Australian Government is not to be undertaken.

47. To minimise the potential impact on the Shire's leadership due to an accident, the following travelling combinations should, whenever practicable, avoid travelling together by air:

- a. the Shire President and a majority of Council members;
- b. the CEO and all Directors.

Exemptions

48. While this policy is intended to cover most travel circumstances, the Chief Executive Officer may, where it is in the public interest to do so, authorise an exemption to this Policy.

Authorisation Details

References:	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996</i> <i>Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members Determination No 1 of 2023</i> Council Member Allowances and Expenses Policy		
Authorised by:	Council		
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