

Policy Name	Elected Members Allowances
Policy Type	Elected Members
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SUMMARY

West Daly Regional Council is committed to ensuring Elected Members are provided with the support necessary for them to effectively carry out their roles in Council. This Policy clarifies the Allowances and Expenses to be paid to Elected Member, Professional Development and Council Approved Activities and travel under the Local Government Act and Local Government Ministerial Guidelines.

Each allowance is determined by Council in conjunction with conditions and maximum levels as contained within the Ministerial Guidelines and applicable legislation. Elected Member allowances do not apply to members of Local Authorities who are entitled to be paid sitting fees and expenses in accordance with the Local Government Act.

BACKGROUND

BASE ALLOWANCE

This allowance, paid fortnightly in arrears, covers day to day electoral activities of each Member. Authority for payment of the Base Allowance is derived from the *NT Local Government Act* and the Ministerial Guidelines. These guidelines are issued annually by the Minister for the Local Government and set the maximum level of allowance that can be paid to a Member for the relevant financial year. While Council can agree to a lower rate, the total paid over the relevant year cannot exceed the maximum level determined in the Ministerial Guidelines. The annual rate and frequency of payment of the allowance are determined by Council when the Council's budget for the relevant financial year is adopted. Once set they cannot be altered. The exceptions are specific situations endorsed by Council for payment of an Extra Meeting Allowance. The base Allowance includes, but is not limited to, agenda study and meeting preparation, attendance at scheduled meetings, attendance at community functions as a Council representative including scheduled meetings of a Local Authority within the members ward, constituency responsibilities and Council representation outside the regional area.

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ELECTORAL ALLOWANCE

The Electoral Allowance, which is also paid fortnightly in arrears, is provided to assist Elected Members with carrying out electoral (community) matters. Authority for, and guidelines for adoption of the level of the allowance is determined by the Ministerial Guidelines as for the Base Allowance. This allowance may be used entirely at the discretion of the Member. An example might include small payments to community members assisting the Elected Member in gaining an appreciation of a community situation. Any decision to make such payments would be the responsibility of the Member and not reflect any liability towards Council. Electoral or Base Allowances are paid monthly in arrears and Members are not under any obligation to account to Council for their application.

EXTRA MEETING ALLOWANCE

Council has determined that where applicable, Extra Meeting Allowances in compliance with legislation will be covered and be for attendance at those meetings or functions which Council has resolved will be covered by this allowance. This level is based on the daily rate of payment for an Elected Member acting as Mayor. Extra Meeting Allowances are not applicable to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The type and level of daily payments are also reviewed annually within the limits outlined in the Ministerial Guidelines. Members should also note that, as with other allowances, Extra Meeting Allowances have a maximum annual level as determined by the Ministerial Guidelines. Once that level of aggregate payment has been reached, no further payments can be made to Members for their attendance at these meetings.

Council has determined the Extra Meeting Allowance will apply to:

- additional Council meetings other than the twelve ordinary meetings scheduled annually;
- members of Committees for meetings held on days other than the days of ordinary Council meetings;
- inclusion in staff selection meetings;
- any meeting for which the CEO requests the attendance of the Elected Member; and
- all other meetings prior approved by Council for payment of this allowance.

Extra Meeting Allowances can only be paid on receipt of an actual claim by Elected Members. Such claims must be lodged within three months of the meeting or event; claims reflecting attendance more than three months after the event or meeting will not be paid unless by direct resolution of the Council. Only one Extra Meeting Allowance may be claimed for any one calendar day. Claims for payment will only cover actual attendance with the proviso that the Member attends at least 75% of the duration of the meeting. Travelling time prior to and after the meeting will be covered by Travel Allowance at prescribed rates and additional Extra Meeting Allowances are not applicable.

It should be noted that this Allowance is not applicable to either the Mayor or Deputy Mayor or to an Elected Member acting in either position as this allowance is incorporated into the Base Allowance of these positions.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ALLOWANCE

This allowance has been designed to cover any course or conference specifically intended to provide professional development to any Elected Member. Payment of this allowance is subject to approval by Council and is payable on direct claim by the Elected Member. Conditions of payment include confirmation of attendance for at least 75% of the duration of the event where the Member has actually travelled to that event, unless non-attendance is supported by a medical certificate in case of injury or illness. Elected Members should note the maximum amount that can be paid in any financial year is annually set by the Minister.

TRAVEL AND EXPENSES ALLOWANCE

Elected Members are entitled to claim all reasonable expenses and travel costs at the prescribed rate applicable to Elected Members and council staff. Travel Allowance will include attendance at scheduled meetings and events or attending to business of Council in accordance with a prior resolution of the Council.

The meeting or event must be held outside the Member's ward and must meet at least one of the following criteria:

be in the interests of the West Daly Regional Council;

- be as a result of a formal invitation to the Elected Member to meet with Commonwealth or Northern Territory Government Ministers or departments or instrumentalities such as Power and Water Corporation, Telstra or other relevant non-government organisations;
- formal invitations to relevant meetings with commercial interests who currently or in the future conduct significant business with the Regional Council; or
- a meeting where the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer believe it is important to have a council representative attend.

If an Elected Member is a member of an external organisation or board and that organisation or board pays an attendance allowance or covers expenses involved, that Elected Member will not be entitled to claim travel or expenses from the Council even if that organisation or board is relevant to the West Daly Regional Council. In all instances the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer will have discretion on what is an appropriate claim.

ACTING MAYOR OR DEPUTY MAYOR ALLOWANCE

Where a casual vacancy occurs in the office of Mayor or Deputy Mayor, the person appointed to fill that casual vacancy is entitled to the Base and Electoral Allowances (but not the Extra Meeting Allowance) applicable to the position being filled.

POLICY STATEMENT

- I. The maximum level and amount of annual allowances will be determined annually when Council adopts its budget for the forthcoming financial year.
- II. Elected Members' Allowances will be paid directly to the Elected Member's banking account. These allowances will be paid in fortnightly instalments in arrears.
- III. Extra Meeting Allowances, Professional Development Allowance as well as Travel and Expenses Allowances must be subject to actual claim while the Base and Electoral Allowances will be remitted monthly.
- IV. Unless otherwise negotiated with the Chief Executive Officer or delegate, all allowance payments will be at the full amount without deduction for either taxation or superannuation purposes. Elected Members are able to request that taxation be deducted and/or superannuation contributions be paid to a nominated fund.
- V. Extra Meeting Allowances for attendance at those meetings or functions which Council has resolved will be covered by this allowance.
- VI. Council has determined the Extra Meeting Allowance will apply to Elected Members who attend:
 - a) additional Council meetings other than the six ordinary meetings scheduled annually;
 - b) as members of Committees for meetings held on days other than days of ordinary Council meetings;
 - c) inclusion in staff selection meetings;
 - d) any meeting for which the CEO requests the attendance of the Elected Member; and
 - e) all other meetings prior approved by Council for payment of this allowance.

Extra Meeting Allowances are not applicable to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or any Elected Member acting as Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

Payment of the Professional Development Allowance is subject to approval by Council and is payable on direct claim by the Elected Member. Conditions of payment include confirmation of attendance for at least 75% of the duration of the event where the Member has actually travelled to that event, unless non-attendance is supported by a medical certificate in case of injury or illness.

Where a meeting or event is held outside the Member's ward and meets at least one of the following criteria, then a Travel and Expenses Allowance is payable. The meeting or event must:

- be in the interests of the West Daly Regional Council;
- be as a result of a formal invitation to the Elected Member to meet with Commonwealth or Northern Territory Government Ministers or departments or

instrumentalities such as Power and Water Corporation, Telstra or other relevant non-government organisations;

- there is a formal invitation to a relevant meeting with commercial interests who currently or in the future may conduct significant business with the Regional Council; or
- a meeting where the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer believe it is important to have a council representative attend.

TERMINOLOGY AND REFERENCES

REFERENCES

Local Government Act

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Chief Executive Officer