
Report of the General Manager - 25 July 2017

ITEM 6.5 **Expenses and Facilities Policies**

AUTHOR **Corporate**

ISSUE

To consider a revised Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy and to adopt a new Senior Staff Facilities Policy.

RECOMMENDATION That -

1. Council endorse the draft Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy for public exhibition in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993.
2. Following public exhibition, of the policy any submissions received be reported to Council.
3. Council adopt the Senior Staff Facilities Policy as outlined in this report.
4. That the Mayor be delegated authority to amend the Senior Staff Facilities Policy as required and as recommended by the General Manager.

BACKGROUND

The *Local Government Act 1993*, stipulates that Councils are to adopt a policy concerning the payment of expenses and provision of facilities for Councillors. As such, at the Extraordinary Meeting on 24 May 2016, Council endorsed the Policy for the Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities for Councillors.

The Office of Local Government (OLG) has recently circulated a better practice Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy template for use by NSW Councils. Accordingly, Council has undertaken a review of its current policy and this report presents a revised policy consideration.

Further, a new Senior Staff Facilities Policy has been developed to guide the provision of facilities for Senior Staff.

REPORT

The draft Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy has been based on the OLG template, and suitably amended to reflect local administrative requirements.

The Policy recognises that the reasonable and appropriate reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities enables Councillors to fulfil their civic duties. Importantly, the draft Policy ensures accountability and transparency in the administration of such expenses and facilities by establishing clear monetary limits for expenditure and reimbursement. Furthermore, expenses not explicitly addressed in the policy will not be paid or reimbursed.

In keeping with community expectations, and to ensure transparency in its implementation, Council commits to reporting of expenses and facilities to Councillors, as well as the inclusion of regular auditing of expenses under this Policy in Council's Audit Plan.

In accordance with section 253 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council is required to give public notice of its intention to amend or adopt a facilities policy, and as such will be placing the draft Policy on public exhibition for a period of 28 days to provide the opportunity for public submissions.

Additionally, a Senior Staff Facilities Policy has been prepared to provide a framework to guide the interpretation of the General Manager and Senior Staff Contracts of Employment to ensure the appropriate allocation of resources to enable Senior Staff to carry out their Council related duties. For clarity, the Senior Staff Facilities Policy is an operational policy, and is not a policy of Council, however it is being reported to Council in the interests of transparency.

It is proposed that this Policy be adopted as attached to the report and in doing so, that Council delegate to the Administrator/Mayor to make necessary amendments from time to time in order to facilitate its implementation.

POLICY IMPACT

Adoption of the Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy will ensure compliance with Council's legislative obligations. Upon its adoption, the Policy will supersede the previously adopted Policy for the Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities for Councillors.

The Senior Staff Facilities Policy is consistent with Council's legislative obligations in respect of Senior Staff.

FINANCIAL IMPACT OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Funding for the implementation of this policy will be made available from Council's adopted budget.

RECOMMENDATION That -

1. Council endorse the draft Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy for public exhibition in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993.
2. Following public exhibition, of the policy any submissions received be reported to Council.
3. Council adopt the Senior Staff Facilities Policy as outlined in this report.

4. That the Mayor be delegated authority to amend the Senior Staff Facilities Policy as required and as recommended by the General Manager.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy
- B. Senior Staff Facilities Policy