



Councillor Travel Policy

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DIRECTORATE	Corporate and Commercial Services	
POLICY OWNER	Manager Governance	
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1 June 2026	1.0	Initial policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a governance, probity and accountability framework for authorised travel undertaken by Councillors whilst performing the role of a Councillor. It ensures such travel:

- Aligns with the functions, duties and conduct obligations of Councillors under the *Local Government Act 2020*.
- Delivers a clear public benefit and measurable outcomes for the municipality.
- For interstate and international travel, is approved through a transparent Council resolution and administered consistently with Council policies and frameworks.
- Manages risk, safety, and cost effectively, including Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) advisory considerations, insurance, data security, and international roaming controls.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Authorised travel for all Councillors, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, when travelling in connection with official Council purposes.
- Attendance at conferences, delegations, training, ceremonies, Sister or Friendship City engagements or advocacy activities outside Victoria.
- Council officers involved in planning, approvals, booking and acquittals.

This Policy must be applied in conjunction with the adopted Council Expenses Policy and legislated requirements under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

This policy does not apply to travel undertaken solely in a personal or private capacity, when the travel is not authorised and/or when the Councillor is not representing Council.

3. Governance Principles and Council Plan Alignment

3.1. Governance Principles

A Council must, in the performance of its role, give effect to the overarching governance principles (*Local Government Act 2020 (Act)* s9). In accordance with the Act, this Policy aligns with the following governance principle/s:

Principle (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;

Principle (i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

3.2. Council Plan Alignment

Strategic Outcome 4: Council Performance and Leadership – A forward-thinking and responsive council that values community input, committed to optimising services, ensuring robust governance and making sustainable decisions.

4. Policy

4.1. Principles

4.1.1. Travel that is funded by Council must deliver clear outcomes that advance Council's adopted strategies, policies and services with a demonstratable community benefit.

4.1.2. Councillors must act within their statutory role, as defined in the *Local Government Act 2020*. Councillors participate in the decision making of the Council during Council Meetings but do not have individual decision-making power and cannot commit Council funds or commit Council to agreements or contracts outside the context of a Council Meeting.

The Mayor's civic leadership role does not create additional decision-making authority.

4.1.3. All arrangements for travel that is funded by Council must be reasonable, prudent and transparent and made in accordance with Council's policies and protocols.

4.1.4. Travel to interstate and international destinations must be endorsed by resolution of Council and consideration given to an accompanying executive officer. Determination on the accompanying executive officer will be made by the CEO.

4.1.5. Logistical arrangements, such as accommodation and flight bookings, are to be booked by officers in accordance with Council's policies and protocols to ensure consistency, value for money and auditability.

4.1.6. Council funded travel must be undertaken in a way that avoids real or perceived conflicts of interest.

In line with the Council Expenses Policy, loyalty points must not be sought or applied for when undertaking Council funded travel (e.g. frequent flyer points).

- 4.1.7. The purpose of travel to Sister and Friendship cities must align with Council's Sister and Friendship City Framework.

4.2. Eligibility, Application Requirements and Approvals

- 4.2.1. A Councillor may make a request to undertake interstate or international travel for official purposes that directly relate to the adopted Council and Wellbeing Plan, strategic priorities, Sister and Friendship City relations, advocacy or skills development relevant to their role and functions as a Councillor. Any such request will be considered by Council in accordance with the following provisions.
- 4.2.2. A Councillor travel proposal must be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer and must include:
- Purpose and alignment to the Council and Wellbeing Plan, Sister and Friendship City Framework or Professional Development Plan
 - Destination(s), dates, draft itinerary
 - Host/organiser details
 - Estimated costs (airfares, accommodation, registration, other transport)
 - DFAT advisory reference
 - Expected benefits and measurable outcomes
 - Conflict of interest declaration
- 4.2.3. The application for interstate or international travel should be presented at the next available Council Meeting for endorsement and should include information such as outlined in Section 4.2.2.
- 4.2.4. Urgent travel that must be undertaken before the next available Council Meeting may be approved by the CEO. The travel must then be presented to Council at the next available Council Meeting for ratification.
- 4.2.5. Requests for Council funded travel and accommodation within Victoria will be assessed in accordance with the Council Expense Policy, noting that section 4.5 within this Policy still applies.

4.3. Risk, Safety & DFAT Advisories

- 4.3.1. Travel advice regarding any risks or safety considerations must be obtained prior to a request for international travel being presented to Council for decision. Refer to *DFAT: Smartraveller* website (smartraveller.gov.au)
- 4.3.2. International travel will not proceed where *DFAT Smartraveller* advises “**Do not Travel**”
- 4.3.3. Where DFAT advises “**Reconsider your need to travel**”, the proposed travel should be reconsidered. On consideration by the CEO, if it is determined the travel is necessary, a tailored risk plan and CEO endorsement are required before the matter is presented to Council for decision.
- 4.3.4. The relevant Councillor is responsible for completing the following steps and must be completed prior to undertaking international travel:
- Finalised itinerary to be provided to CEO

- Emergency contact information to be provided to CEO
- Data security precautions to be understood and strictly followed
- Required visas and vaccinations are the responsibility of the relevant Councillor

4.4. Air Fares

- 4.4.1. Only standard economy flights may be purchased for interstate and international flights.
- 4.4.2. Best fare of the day should be considered in the first instance.

4.5. Accommodation

- 4.5.1. In-line the Council Expenses Policy, where overnight accommodation is required, the Director Corporate and Commercial Services or delegate, or as determined by Council, will arrange booking and payment for a Councillor's accommodation at the conference hotel (or appropriate nearby venue, in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy, if the cost is less than that promoted by the conference organiser).
- 4.5.2. Noting the need for a careful approach in the use of public funds, the standard should not exceed 4-star accommodation. Although, 5-star accommodation may be permitted, if it is in-line with section 4.5.1.
- 4.5.3. Suitable accommodation within a reasonable distance from the main location of the applicable Council business should be considered.
- 4.5.4. Bookings should be made in advance by Council officers and should be paid for with Council credit card or EFT, where possible.
- 4.5.5. Cancellation policies should be considered when finalising accommodation bookings. Any cancellations must be made as soon as possible.

4.6. General Expenses

- 4.6.1. All claims for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for meals, any required transport or other necessities, related to the authorised travel, must be substantiated by the production of tax invoice.
- 4.6.2. All claims for reimbursement will be processed in accordance with the Council Expenses Policy.

4.7. Travel Insurance

- 4.7.1. Council's travel insurance only provides coverage whilst a *Covered Person*, including any accompanying spouse/partner, is on a *journey*, being Council authorised travel.
- 4.7.2. Council's travel insurance coverage does not include any components of travel that are not authorised by Council, i.e. any personal or private travel arranged by the Councillor.

4.8. Technology, Data Security & International Roaming

Council Devices

- 4.8.1. Councillors may take their primary device overseas. However, subject to a risk assessment on the overseas destination, it will be determined by the CEO if the primary device is permitted, or a supplementary device is required.

- 4.8.2. In accordance with Council's IT Policy (section 6.2.14), when travelling overseas, global roaming functionality is turned off on the Councillor's primary device by default.
- 4.8.3. Access to Council systems from overseas locations is blocked and not permitted.
- 4.8.4. Council will not meet or reimburse the cost of private interstate calls and international use of mobile devices unless a prior arrangement has been made with the Mayor and Director Corporate and Commercial Services, or as determined by Council.
- 4.8.5. Any use of Council supplied communications equipment may be monitored or recorded, read, copied and disclosed in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and policies.

Exceptions

- 4.8.6. Where a Council approved mobile phone device has been provided, exceptions to Council system access and global roaming functionality may be considered with prior approval from the CEO, in consultation with IT.

Additional Requirements (where an exception is approved)

- 4.8.7. International roaming (including calls, SMS, and data) is not enabled on Council-issued devices and will only be enabled where there is a clear business requirement.
- 4.8.8. Councillors must minimise data usage costs by using trusted Wi-Fi networks, where available. Use of public or unsecured Wi-Fi is not permitted.
- 4.8.9. Any access to Council systems must only be via approved secure methods.
- 4.8.10. Council devices must be kept secure at all times and must not be left unattended in public places.
- 4.8.11. Any loss or theft of a Council device must be reported to IT immediately.
- 4.8.12. In accordance with Council's Workplace Surveillance Policy, use of Council devices may be monitored to ensure the security and protection of Council's data and ICT systems.
- 4.8.13. IT may restrict or disable access to Council systems or services from overseas locations based on security risk.

4.9. Representation & Protocol

- 4.9.1. When travelling on official Council business, Councillors represent Council collectively. Any public statements must be consistent with adopted Council positions and in accordance with the Communications Policy.

4.10. Role Limitations

- 4.10.1. Mayor and Councillors must not:
 - Purport to negotiate or enter into any agreement, contract, MOU, or purport to make binding any commitment on behalf of Council.

- Offer or accept any gifts or benefits inconsistent with the Councillor Gift Policy, Councillor Offering of Gifts and Donations Protocol, Conflict of Interest Policy or Model Councillor Code of Conduct.
- Direct staff of any other government or entity, or purport to commit Council resources beyond what has been endorsed by Council.

4.10.2. Any request of commitment must be referred to the CEO for appropriate action.

4.11. Meetings & Advocacy

4.11.1. Any advocacy must align with adopted Council strategies.

4.11.2. Briefing notes will be prepared by officers. Key outcomes and actions should be recorded by the Councillor for inclusion in the post-travel report.

4.12. Participation in scheduled Council Meetings and Briefings while overseas

4.12.1. A Councillor may only participate in any scheduled Council Meetings or Briefings while overseas using the international roaming service and in compliance with relevant guidelines and must not use local public Wi-Fi.

4.12.2. The Councillor must be in a secure location, such as a hotel room or private room, not in an open environment, such as a hotel lobby or public space.

4.13. Personal/Private arrangements

4.13.1. Councillors may undertake personal activities and travel arrangements during their Council endorsed travel at their own expense and at their own arrangement.

4.13.2. Council will not pay additional costs arising from personal activities (eg. fare differences, additional accommodation needs, personal insurance).

4.13.3. Bookings made by officers will only cover official Council related activities.

4.14. Accompanying Persons

4.14.1. Travel costs, including meals and incidentals, for accompanying persons will not be covered by Council.

4.14.2. Accompanying persons may not attend officially scheduled meetings.

4.14.3. Accompanying persons may attend ceremonial functions, where appropriate (eg. where other accompanying persons are also in attendance with delegates from other agencies or organisations).

4.14.4. In accordance with the Council Expenses Policy:

- Council will not generally meet or reimburse any of the costs associated with the attendance of a partner at seminars or conferences (i.e. registration fees, entry fees, meals and other necessary associated out of pocket expenses). Such costs must be met by the Councillor.
- Payment or reimbursement of expenses associated with the attendance of a Councillor's partner at a civic function or event is subject to prior approval by the CEO and/or Mayor, or as determined by Council.
- Matters relevant to the approval of a payment or reimbursement of the costs associated with the attendance of a Councillor partner include:

- the additional cost to Council through the attendance of the partner and
- the availability of funds in the relevant budget;
- whether there is an expectation or agreement for partners to attend (for example, if other attendees are generally accompanied, or if the partner is specifically included in the invitation); and
- equity amongst all Councillors or Delegated Committee members

4.15. Reporting

- 4.15.1. As per the Council Expenses Policy, after attending a conference, seminar, event or training course, a Councillor will provide a verbal report or written summary to Council via a Delegates' Report to Council, which outlines the purpose of the conference, learning outcomes and matters of relevance to the Frankston municipality.
- 4.15.2. The post-travel Delegates Report to Council does not commit Council to implementing any of the reported outcomes or benefits.
- 4.15.3. All Councillor travel will be recorded in the Travel Register and be published on Council's website and Transparency Hub, in accordance with Council's Public Transparency Policy.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Mayor and Councillors	Responsible for: • Initiating formal requests for travel, ensuring alignment to the Council & Wellbeing Plan, Sister and Friendship City Framework or their Professional Development Plan • Declaring any conflict of interest with the requested travel • Complying with their role as a Councillor, as defined in the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> • Complying with data security and international roaming requirements and guidelines • Ensuring required documentation is current, including holding a valid passport and relevant travel visa Providing a post-travel Delegates report to Council
Mayor	Responsible for: • Providing civic leadership on delegations • Ensuring representation is consistent with adopted positions Not making decisions or entering into agreements on behalf of Council, where Council endorsement has not been previously provided
Chief Executive Officer	Responsible for:

	- Assessing interstate and international travel requests - Ensuring relevant frameworks and risk controls are in place - Approving urgent interstate travel, where required Ensuring adherence to this policy
Manager Governance	Responsible for: - Providing travel application assessment advice with respect to travel for training and development purposes - Providing oversight and advice on the implementation of this policy - Ensuring the travel register is available on Council's website and Transparency Hub on a quarterly basis Review this policy
Manager Business & Information Technology	Responsible for: Providing a secured mobile phone device to the Councillor travelling overseas, where required Ensuring data/roaming and security arrangements are established
Manager Community Relations	Responsible for: - Providing travel application assessment advice with respect to sister and friendship city travel requests - Coordination of Sister and Friendship City visits and itinerary, including liaising with respective Sister and Friendship City departments - Providing consulate and emergency information of the visiting town/country - Providing notification to DFAT on relevant international travel Preparation of briefing materials for advocacy and Sister and Friendship City related engagements
Councillors Office	Responsible for: - Providing administrative support to the Mayor and Councillors, in accordance with this policy - Booking flights and accommodation for approved and endorsed travel Preparing and issuing travel packs, including finalised itinerary

6. Policy non-compliance

Non-compliance with this Policy may result in non-reimbursement of expenses, requirement to repay associated costs, a formal Council resolution response or referral under the Model Councillor Code of Conduct. Non-compliance with data security requirements may result in data breaches impacting Council's IT systems. Such breaches may impact the daily functioning of Council operations, impact the privacy of individuals and incur financial penalties and reputational harm for Councillors and/or Council

7. Definitions

Term	Definition
<i>Accompanying person</i>	Means a partner/spouse and/or dependent child(ren)
<i>Authorised travel</i>	Means travel within Victoria that has been authorised by the CEO or delegate and interstate and international travel that has been endorsed by resolution of Council.
<i>Covered person</i>	As defined in Council's Insurance Policy and as it applies to this Policy, includes the Mayor, elected members, Councillors and their accompanying persons.
<i>DFAT</i>	Means Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
<i>EFT</i>	Means Electronic Funds Transfer
<i>International Roaming Controls</i>	Means the rules, system settings and approval processes that govern how devices (such as mobile phones and laptops) and data services while travelling overseas.
<i>Journey</i>	As defined in Council's Insurance Policy, means a trip undertaken on the business of the Policy holder and/or authorised by the Policy holder provided such travel involves a destination fifty (5) kilometres or more from the Covered Person's home or normal place of business. Cover shall commence from the time a Covered Person leaves their home or normal place of business, whichever is left last and continue on a fulltime twenty-four (24) hour basis until the Covered Person returns to their Home of normal place of business, whichever occurs first. The maximum duration of any one (1) trip is 180 days. Journey does not include normal commuting between the Covered Person's Home and normal place of business.
<i>Primary device</i>	Means the main device (mobile phone, iPad or laptop) that has been issued to the individual Councillor at the commencement of the Council term to use in the performance of their Councillor role and function.
<i>Post-travel Delegates report</i>	Means a Delegates report from the travelling Councillor/s that is tabled at a Council Meeting, summarising the outcomes, learnings, benefits and final costs associated with the travel taken.
<i>Public Wi-Fi</i>	Means free or paid internet access provided in public areas, such as, but not limited to, hotels, airports, cafes and libraries. These networks are usually unsecured and unencrypted, making them a high risk for sensitive activities. Data sent over these networks can easily be intercepted.
<i>Reasonable</i>	Means an amount and nature that is consistent with public expectations. When determining whether a cost is reasonable,

	relevant factors will include whether the cost is necessary, cost-conscious and capable of withstanding public scrutiny.
<i>Sister and Friendship City Framework</i>	Means a document that provides a clear, consistent and strategic approach of how Council establishes, manages, reviews and exits current and future Sister and Friendship city relationships.
<i>Statutory role</i>	Means the role and performance of the Mayor or Councillor, as defined in the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .
<i>Third-Party support</i>	Means funding or in-kind benefits from external organisations (eg conference hosts), subject to conflict of interest assessment and approval.
<i>Value for money</i>	Means a justified balance of cost, quality, safety and results in achieving Council objectives.

8. Related documents

8.1. Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*, and associated Victorian Protective Data Security Standards

8.2. Internal Documents

- Communication Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Council and Wellbeing Plan
- Council Expenses Policy
- Councillor Offering of Gifts and Donations Protocol
- Councillor Gift Policy
- IT Policies
- Model Councillor Code of Conduct
- Privacy Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Public Transparency Policy
- Sister and Friendship City Framework
- Workplace Surveillance Policy

8.3. Other Documents and resources

- DFAT SmartTraveller (smartraveller.gov.au)

9. Implementation of the Policy

This Policy will be provided on the Councillor Portal, Intranet and Council's website.