

Councillors/employee interstate and overseas travel

POLICY NO AND TITLE	1.2.1	Conditions of employment policy
PROCEDURE	1.2.1(q)	Councillor/employee interstate and overseas travel
VERSION AND DATE ADOPTED	1	
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER		Manager Human Resources

Introduction

Council recognises that there are occasions when employees and/or Councillors will need to travel interstate or overseas to attend conferences, seminars, study tours and training courses or to represent the interests of their local area.

A set of procedures has been developed to guide employees and Councillors in planning interstate and overseas travel where Council funds are to be used to finance the journey.

The thrust of the policy is that plans for any such travel should be transparent to the community and have an identifiable benefit to the local area through Council activity.

Interstate Travel

In most cases the need for interstate travel cannot be anticipated with as long a lead time as can reasonably be expected for overseas travel. There are regional issues that will involve Bega Valley Shire Council and areas of East Gippsland in Victoria which are regarded as regional travel. Where travel in this category does not exceed \$2,000 the provisions of this policy do not apply.

There are instances where councils are required to visit Canberra for official purposes such as meetings with federal parliamentarians and ministers. For purposes of this policy the ACT is regarded as being within NSW and the provisions of this policy do not apply.

Where Councillors propose to travel interstate, the proposals should be considered at an open Council meeting through a report from the Mayor or General Manager.

The General Manager is to approve all interstate travel for staff members.

Where the cost of the travel is not expected to exceed \$2,000 for transport, accommodation, and out of pocket reimbursement of expenses per person, no detail need be supplied other than a recommendation for approval that the visit take place. This refers to Councillor travel (to be approved by Council) and employee travel (to be approved by General Manager).

Where the cost of the travel is expected to exceed \$2,000 for transport, accommodation, and out of pocket reimbursement of expenses per person, a detailed report is to be provided outlining:

- who is to take part in the travel
- the objectives to be achieved in undertaking it, including an explanation of what community benefits will accrue as a result of the visit

- details of costs, including any amounts expected to be reimbursed to participants

In respect of Councillor travel, a detailed report should be included in the Annual Report in the year that the travel was undertaken, outlining how the travel's objectives were met and how the community benefited from it.

Where exceptional cases arise and travel is to be undertaken at short notice before a report can be considered at the next Council meeting, the above details should be reported to the General Manager for decision and the outcomes, costs and attendances should be included in a report to the next Council meeting for the information of Councillors.

If the travel is to be sponsored by private enterprise, ICAC guidelines and reporting structures annexed to this policy are to be followed.

Overseas Travel

Proposals for overseas travel for staff and/or Councillors on Council business should be documented in the annual management plan. Community input about the proposed visit can therefore be considered as part of the management plan review and budgetary process.

Proposals should indicate:

- who is planned to take part in the travel
- the objectives for undertaking it, including an explanation of what community benefits will accrue from the exercise, with an approximate budget
- detailed costs including a statement of any amounts expected to be reimbursed by the participants

A detailed report should be given in the Annual Report for the year in which the visit took place, outlining how the objectives were met and what quantifiable benefits have/will flow to the community.

The Council will consider proposals and resolve whether or not the travel is to take place.

If the visit is to be sponsored by private enterprise, ICAC guidelines and reporting structures annexed to this policy are to be followed and this should form part of the community reporting process.