



Tiwi Islands Regional Council

Title: Travel and Accommodation Delegation Policy
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PURPOSE:

This policy outlines travel and accommodation guidelines for all Council employees, Elected Members and all other persons authorized to undertake business travel on behalf of Tiwi Islands Regional Council (TIRC).

Business related travel includes training, meetings and conferences and special events related to TIRC business attended as the **nominated representative** of the Council. It does not include attendance at events in any other role or representation, including but not limited to Sporting & Cultural Associations, Land Councils etc. Nominated representation by staff will be determined by the Chief Executive Officer. Nominated representation by Elected Members will be determined by the Council and travel approved by the CEO.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this policy are:

- To clarify Council's responsibilities to meet accommodation, travel and incidental expenses for Council employees, elected members and other authorized persons whilst on approved Council business
- To ensure that Council representatives provide clear accounting for all travel expenditures and are not financially disadvantaged as a result of business travel requirements.
- To maximize the effectiveness of travel budgets available to Council.

POLICY:

- **Delegations**
- Approval of all interstate and international travel and accommodation undertaken for Council business rests exclusively with the Chief Executive Officer.

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- All other business travel may be approved by the following delegates for employees under their direct line supervision and in accordance with financial delegations:
 - Chief Executive Officer
 - General Manager Community Development and Services
 - General Manager Finance & Compliance
 - General Manager Infrastructure and Asset Services
- All Elected Members travel must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer or, in the CEO's absence, a General Manager.
- Chief Executive Officer's travel must be approved by the Mayor or, in her/his absence, the Deputy Mayor.
- All General Managers travel must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

Travel Acquittal

- All TIRC staff who have completed official travel are responsible for ensuring a Travel Acquittal Form (Appendix – A). This form is to be completed by the responsible officer within 10 working days after completion of the travel. Failure to complete or to acquit your travel may affect approval on any future travel.
- Please find attached an example of Travel Acquittal Form for your information.

- **OFFICIAL TRAVEL within the NORTHERN TERRITORY**

- **Movement Requisition:**

- All employees and other authorized persons must receive prior written approval normally in the form of a properly completed and authorized Movement Requisition. All requisitions for accommodation and travel allowances must be authorized by the relevant General Manager, Regional Manager or Regional Coordinator, depending on the level of delegation within the authorized officer's position. All movement requisitions must show the requesting officer and then the approving officer prior to the bookings being confirmed.
- General Managers when approving official travel and related expenses must ensure that funds are available under the relevant budget line items and that the requesting officer has provided/submitted the appropriate finance codes.
- In the case of General Managers submitting Movement Requisitions for official travel must be submitted to the CEO – 1 week prior to the official travel, unless unforeseen circumstances have arisen and the travel is urgent then the timeframe will be waived, provided the circumstances to approve the waiver of the timeframe is justified. All Movement Requisitions must be submitted to the Executive Assistant in a timely manner, and that all information is accurate and completed. Failure to do this, General Managers

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travel will be refused.

- Incomplete Movement Requisitions will not be processed and will be returned to the employee or Manager. Failure to gain prior written approval for travel may result in reimbursement claims being refused.
- In the event of any emergency or in unforeseen circumstances, every effort must be made by the Officer requesting the travel, to seek approval by Movement Requisition, by phone and email from the relevant General Manager during business hours or by contacting them after hours if necessary.
- **ALL** phone or email approvals must be followed by a properly approved Movement Requisition with a covering Memo outlining the reasons for post-travel approval or variations to the submitted and approved Movement Requisition.
- There are two types of Movement Requisition forms for staff, depending on the Officers salary; it is the Officers responsibility to ensure that the correct and current version of the form is used.
- **Airfares**
- Airfares will be booked by the designated Travel Officer using details provided on the Movement Requisition. All domestic travel bookings should be the best economy airfare – and the best travel time for the event that is available; unless there is good cause for booking a flexible or business class fare. Where possible, all airfares for interstate travel will be booked for travel during daylight hours.
- Airfares should be paid by Purchase Order; a credit care should not be used to pay for airfares unless there is no alternative.
- For interstate travel cancellation policies may vary depending on the classification of the ticket purchased. The terms and conditions are provided on the ticket document issued, it is the responsibility of the Officer travelling to familiarize themselves with the cancellation policy that apply to their bookings.
- Penalties apply for cancellations and, where the terms and conditions for cancellations are not followed, the penalty may be required to repay the full price of the ticket will be borne by the Officer.

Accommodation

When travel is required outside the Council area, or within the Council area, but away from home, for a period requiring overnight absence, the Council will pay accommodation costs. Accommodation is only payable for authorized overnight TIRC business and no cash advance is payable. Should an employee choose to extend their stay for personal reasons, either travelling earlier than required or staying extra days, accommodation and meal allowances will not be paid for any additional nights spent away.



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All accommodation must be booked through the designated Travel Officer(s) providing as much advance notice of travel as possible; unless there are exceptional circumstances such as out of hour's approval, last minute advice for urgent travel.

All accommodation, where practicable, should be booked through preferred providers. The selection of accommodation will be based on cost, proximity to the business venues to be visited on behalf of Council and availability. All accommodation should be booked at Government Rates or better.

Where possible, and cost effective, accommodation will be booked to include meals; for example accommodation with breakfast included. No meal allowance will be paid for these meals when this occurs.

Holders of Council issued credit cards shall not book accommodation directly with any hotel except where there is no other alternative. All booking confirmations should be kept as receipt of payment.

The Travel Officer, or person authorized to book the accommodation, must be informed if bookings need to be cancelled or travel arrangements changed.

TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

To be entitled to travel allowances, the traveler must be away for minimum of one night from their primary place of residence.

Travel allowances shall be paid in accordance with the current rates determined by the Australian Taxation Office.

Should an employee choose to extend their stay for personal reasons (either post or prior extension), travel allowances will only be paid from or up to the time the employee would have left or arrived home.

The payment of travel allowance does not apply to those who hold Council issued credit cards and elect to pay expenses rather than claim Travel Allowance. Credit card holders should refer to the Credit Card policy, but should be mindful of the allowances otherwise payable when incurring expenses.

Meal allowances:

Payment of meal allowances depends on the period and time of travel. These rates only apply from the commencement of travel to the end of the travel period. Meal allowance for breakfast and dinner will depend on the time that travel begins and ends where the traveler is more than one hour's travel or 60km from their home location at the recognized meal time *excluding day travel to Darwin*. Travel time will be deemed to begin and end at the airport; or the office, where vehicle travel is undertaken.

A meal allowance is not payable where a meal is provided:

- By the Council; e.g. attending Council meetings, workshops, etc.
- A part of conference attendance or where a meal is included in the accommodation booking,



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Where travel allowance is paid in advance and the traveler is subsequently provided with a meal while travelling, the allowance for that meal should be repaid.

Costs incurred for meals and refreshments which exceed the daily allowance, shall be the responsibility of the traveler.

There is no requirement to provide receipts for food or drink purchased with the travel allowance.

Incidentals allowance

Incidentals allowance is paid for each day, assessed as a 24 hour block of time that the traveler is away from home. Incidental allowance covers minor personal expenses associated with travel, e.g. toiletries, food spoilage, laundry expenses, personal phone/internet and personal excess baggage charges.

Incidentals allowance will not be paid for any additional days if the traveler chooses to extend their stay, for personal reasons; where travel is extended for business reasons additional days of incidentals allowance must be approved by the authorized approval officer.

Other Travel Expenses

The Council will pay other travel costs incurred by Council employees and representatives for expenses not covered by the Travel Allowance. Other travel expenses may include:

- Taxi and public transport fares when a Cabcharge voucher has not been provided
- Parking fees for work cars
- Excess baggage costs for Council goods only (excess baggage will not be paid for personal items)
- Postal costs for Council business
- Internet costs e.g. e-mails to Council when without access to the system
- Telephone costs for council business when without access to Council mobile phone.
- Meal costs for travelers using corporate cards when a meal has been purchased from an outlet where cards are not accepted

These costs will be reimbursed upon provision of a tax invoice and a properly completed and authorized Staff Reimbursement Claim Form.

Changes and cancellation of travel arrangements

The Council recognizes that, from time to time, circumstances may arise that require changes to, and cancellation of, travel arrangements.

To maximize the effectiveness of travel budgets, changes to, and cancellations of, travel arrangements must be kept to a minimum.

All persons travelling on Council business, including Elected Members, current and potential Council employees, guests and consultants, must:



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- a) be informed in advance of procedures for varying and cancelling travel arrangements; and
- b) seek prior approval to change and cancel airfares and accommodation.

The General Manager responsible for approving the initial travel arrangements may approve changes and cancellations.

Wherever possible, changes and cancellations will be made by the Travel Officer or the person authorized to make the original bookings upon receipt of approval from the relevant Manager or General Manager.

In the case of an emergency or unforeseen event requiring cancellation of travel arrangements, all persons travelling on Council business must make every effort to contact the General Manager or the Travel Officers to ensure that cancellations are made in as timely a manner as possible.

In an emergency or due to other constraints, where cancellations have been made without prior approval as outlined above, a written report must be submitted to the Director with a copy to the Travel Officer outlining the reasons for the changes or cancellation. Failure to provide an explanation for changing travel arrangements may lead to Council seeking reimbursement of penalties incurred.

BUSINESS TRAVEL WITHIN THE TIWI ISLANDS

When undertaking travel within the Tiwi Islands, in particular when travelling to and from Council premises in the three main communities, employees are expected to develop travel plans approved in advance by the relevant Manager or Director.

When using Council vehicles to travel within the Council area, travelers are expected to make every effort to combine travel with others, where practicable, to minimize the costs. Travelers must book a vehicle providing as much advance notice as practicable and provide an Internal Work Order. Advance notice of at least two working days is required.

All employees booking a Council vehicle must hold a current Australian drivers licence of the appropriate class for the type of vehicle used.

Refer to Motor Vehicles policy for more information regarding use of Council vehicles.

Meal and incidental allowances

The On Island per day travel rate applies. There is no entitlement for meal and incidental allowances for same day travel within the Council area, including travel between Darwin and the islands. Costs incurred for meals and refreshments shall be the responsibility of the employee.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

If an employee or elected member is required to travel overseas on Council related business the Council will pay the following expenses:

- Passport and application fees
- Vaccinations if recommended by World Health Organization for the particular destination



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- Visa fees
- International travel insurance
- Airport taxes.

Meal and incidentals allowances will be paid as per the rates determined by the Australian Taxation Office for the country or countries visited. The policy outlined above for payment of meal allowances will also apply to international travel. Such travel must also be approved in accordance with local government finance regulations.

MONITORING EMPLOYEE TRAVEL

For safety reasons as well as courtesy to colleagues, whose day to day work relates to the performance of the duties of other employees, it is essential that an employee's whereabouts and contact details are available to their supervisor and others.

When working off site, whether within the Council area or travelling outside the Council area, employees shall ensure that their travel plans and/or absences from their primary place of work during Council business hours are displayed on the appropriate office white board or on the shared calendar in MS Outlook.

A detailed Travel Report attaching Movement Requisitions and all approved expenditures shall be provided to the Chief Executive Officer and Deputy Director Corporate Services on the third Monday of every month.

Other relevant Council documents:

Code of Conduct

Financial Delegations.

Vehicle Management and Use Policy

Credit Card Policy