

Expenses, Reimbursements and Allowances Policy

July 2026

The following is the expenses regime for elected members of the Otago Regional Council.

Principles

- Reimbursement of expenses incurred is available where required by virtue of membership for Council and Committee meetings, workshops, consent hearings, Council approved representation and Council organised events, and Chair-approved constituency activity including invitations from constituency groups, or general Council invitations.
- Reimbursement will be in line with the Remuneration Authority's latest determination – link [here](#).
- Claims are to be made by Councillors in the GO Expense claim system (GO). Expense claims will not be automatically generated by staff. Claims will be approved by the General Manager Finance.
- When an expense claim is submitted in GO the Councillor certifies that the expenses are incurred on legitimate Council business in accordance with Council policy, that the amounts were incurred and paid for by the Councillor and no claim for reimbursement of any sum will be made from another source for these costs.
- Travel shall be shared where practicable. Whereby virtue of private arrangements a Councillor chooses not to utilise Council provided or shared travel, expenses shall not be reimbursed.
- Accommodation and travel arrangements to be made through the Governance Support Officers or an Executive Assistant.
- The basis of reimbursement is actual and reasonable.
- Claims are to be supported by itemised GST invoices / receipts.
- No alcohol can be claimed, with the exception being a Councillor required to do so as a hosting requirement and the expenditure is pre-approved by the Chairperson.
- Costs of spouse/partner accompaniment to be met privately.
- Where Council provided transport is available and not used, mileage allowance is not claimable.
- Claims for travel are to be based on distance from normal residences, or such shorter distance as may be involved.
- Mileage is for travel in a private motor vehicle and by the most direct route that is reasonable in the circumstances.
- Travel time is to be by the quickest form of transport and most direct route that is reasonable in the circumstances.
- Claims should be made as soon as is practicable following the meeting or activity claimed for.

Specific Considerations

Hearing Fees

The amount payable to a Councillor who acts as Chair of a hearing panel is \$130 per hour. The amount payable to a Councillor who is a member of a hearing panel, but not the Chair, is \$104 per hour. Other conditions that apply to these payments including the hearings that apply and time that may be claimed are set out in the determination (Clause 16).

Motor Vehicle Mileage Allowance

The maximum motor vehicle mileage allowance authorised by the determination will be paid for qualifying travel (Clause 10).

Travel Time Allowance

A travel time allowance as authorised by the determination will be paid for qualifying travel (Clause 11).

ICT allowance

- iPads (or a similar device of Council's choice) will be supplied to each Councillor, with an appropriate data connection. Ownership is retained by the Council.
- An appropriate printer will be supplied on request for the use of each Councillor. Ownership is retained by Council. Cost of reasonable consumables for Council use to be met by the Council.
- Where a Councillor prefers to utilise their own equipment, allowances are available as per the determination (Clause 12). This equipment and internet connection must be of a standard acceptable to Council
- A communication allowance of \$550 per annum will be paid as per the determination (Clause 12). This covers:
 - use of personal mobile phone equipment \$150,
 - use of a member's own mobile phone service (call and data costs) \$400.
- The communications allowance will be paid 6-monthly in arrears (in April and October).

Childcare allowance

A childcare allowance as authorised by the determination will be paid when a member is engaged on qualifying Council business. Claims are to be on an actual reimbursement basis and need to be supported by itemised GST invoices / receipts (Clause 13).

Home security system allowance (available post-2025 elections)

Reimbursement will be provided towards a home security system to cover the installation and monitoring at an elected member's primary place of residence within the council's area as authorised by the determination.

The payment of this reimbursement allowance, following the completion of an authorised threat and risk assessment, is at the discretion of the council up to the maximum amounts shown in the determination. The local authority must have the Authority's approval before making any reimbursements above the specified maximum amounts (Clause 14).

Incidental Costs

Incidental costs such as accommodation, meals, parking, fares and other such costs incurred on Council business are recoverable on an actual and reasonable basis. Such claims are to be supported by itemised GST invoices / receipts and approved by the Chief Executive or General Manager Finance. As stated in the principles, it is Council's preference that accommodation and travel arrangements are booked by Council through the Governance Support Officers or an Executive Assistant.

Where a Councillor chooses to stay privately when otherwise Council provided accommodation would be provided, an allowance of \$65 per night is payable.

Unforeseen Expenses and Costs

Any unforeseen expenses or costs of any Councillor related to Council activities (except for constituency work which must be approved by the Chairperson) may be reimbursed at the discretion of the Chief Executive or General Manager Finance.

Chairperson

In recognition of the Chairperson's wider Council role, the following additional entitlements are available:

- Provision of a Council vehicle in accordance with the Remuneration Authority's use formula.
- Provision of a cell phone including call and data costs (if this is taken up, the communications allowance outlined above is not applicable).
- Membership of Air New Zealand Koru Club.