

Entertainment and Hospitality - Statutory Policy

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Policy Owner	<i>Customer Support and Governance</i>
Link to Corporate Plan	<i>Sustainable Organisation</i>
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Related Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 2009 Local Government Regulation 2012</i>
Related Documents	<i>Councillor Expenses and Reimbursement - Council Policy Procurement - Council Policy Drug and Alcohol - Organisational Policy</i>

Policy Version	Approval Date	Adopted/Approved
<i>1</i>	<i>15/10/2008</i>	<i>Ordinary Meeting of Council</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>17/02/2010</i>	<i>Ordinary Meeting of Council</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>14/12/2011</i>	<i>Ordinary Meeting of Council</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>18/12/2013</i>	<i>Ordinary Meeting of Council</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>17/08/2016</i>	<i>Ordinary Meeting of Council</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>20/01/2021</i>	<i>Ordinary Meeting of Council</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>07/03/2024</i>	<i>Ordinary Meeting of Council</i>

*This policy may not be current as Council regularly reviews and updates its policies. The latest controlled version can be found in the policies section of Council's intranet or Website. **A hard copy of this electronic document is uncontrolled.***

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Council maintains public sector standards of accountability in relation to entertainment and hospitality and that any expenditure incurred by Council for entertainment or hospitality is appropriate with regards to the benefit to Council or the public.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to Councillors and all employees (including contractors and volunteers) of Western Downs Regional Council.

This policy applies to expenditure by Council for entertainment and hospitality, excluding:

- (1) the provision of minor food and beverages such as tea, coffee, sugar, and milk located in a staff/luncheon room;
- (2) the payment of meal allowances or similar benefits to Council staff in accordance with relevant Industrial Awards and Enterprise Bargaining Agreements; and
- (3) entertainment and hospitality included in the standard registration package at training, workshops, conferences, and seminars.

3. POLICY

Council recognises that there are circumstances where the provision of entertainment and hospitality is appropriate and can result in significant benefits to the Western Downs region. Reasonable and appropriate expenditure for the purposes of entertainment and hospitality may be incurred by Councillors and Council employees in the ordinary course of enacting their respective responsibilities. As a public funded entity, Council must ensure that public sector standards of accountability are maintained and that the practice of providing entertainment and hospitality is consistent across the organisation.

3.1 General Principles

The following general principles apply to all entertainment and hospitality expenditure by Council. All expenditure must be:

- (1) for official Council purposes and/or incurred in the public interest;
- (2) reasonable and appropriate to Council's business;
- (3) commensurate with the benefit received by Council or the public;
- (4) properly documented, with the purpose for the expenditure clearly identified;
- (5) in accordance with all other related policies, procedures, and practices; and
- (6) expenditure incurred by Council which is not reasonable and appropriate (for example, private expenses) must be repaid to Council immediately.

3.2 Acceptable Entertainment and/or Hospitality

Examples of where entertainment and/or hospitality are appropriate include:

Civic and Public Functions

A service or function provided by Council for hosting and entertaining of:-

- (1) invited members of the public for promoting an initiative or project of Council; and
- (2) government officials, dignitaries, or elected politicians from all levels of government visiting the local government area in an official capacity.

Included are citizenship ceremonies, community engagement activities, volunteers functions, hosting prospective senior staff, developers and investors, community organisations, media, and other significant community events.



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Conference, Functions, Workshops, Meetings and Seminars

Approved attendance at a conference, function, course, meeting, seminar, workshop, or another forum that is:-

- (1) held by the local government for its Councillors, Officers, or other persons; or
- (2) paid for a Councillor or Officer to attend a function as part of their official duties or obligations.

Sanctioned Social Functions

Approved social functions hosted by Council for its Councillors or Employees.

Included are annual Christmas parties and employer reward and recognition presentations for provision of services to the public, retirement functions, and functions in honour of a long-standing employee or elected member.

3.3 Guiding Principles for Entertainment and Hospitality Expenditure

The following guiding principles apply for entertainment and hospitality expenditure:

- (1) Councillors and employees incurring expenditure must be able to identify the benefit to the community and how the expenditure contributes to promoting Council's policy and strategic outcomes (that is, the expenditure must be justifiable).
- (2) Approval from the relevant authorised officer should be sought before expenditure is incurred. Where this is not practical, reimbursement may be sought subject to the guiding principles of this policy.
- (3) Personal expenses must not be paid by Council. Expenditure incurred by Council which is not reasonable and appropriate must be repaid to Council within fourteen (14) days of being paid.
- (4) Expenditure is to be approved by a Council employee who has the appropriate financial delegation and the expenditure is within budget for the financial year. In granting approval for expenditure, the relevant authorised officer must ensure that such expenditure complies with the principles of this policy.
- (5) Entertainment and hospitality for Council visitors, guests, and benefactors will typically take the form of meals and should be undertaken involving the minimum number of Councillors and employees who will be able to advance Council business by their attendance.
- (6) The consumption of alcohol has social connotations and its provision has characteristics of entertainment. As representatives of Council, employees may consume alcohol only in moderation for the purposes of hospitality. Employees must be able to perform their duties in a safe manner in accordance with Council policy and the law.
- (7) Purchases of alcohol on behalf of Council must be authorised by the Chief Executive Officer prior to the purchase being made.
- (8) Spouse/partner entertainment, accommodation and hospitality costs will be met by Council in instances where the spouse/partner of a Councillor or staff member is invited by the Council or the Chief Executive Officer to attend an approved function.
- (9) A corporate credit card may only be used to pay for entertainment and hospitality expenditure where such expenditure is consistent with this policy and payment by purchase order is not appropriate or possible.
- (10) Any expenditure must comply with legal, financial, audit, and ethical requirements.

3.4 Exceptions / Expanded Definition of Permissible Activities

Permissible entertainment activities may be extended from time to time to include events authorised by the Chief Executive Officer.

