

DRAFT EXPENSES AND FACILITIES POLICY

Preamble

All joint organisations must, in consultation with their member councils, adopt a policy for payment of expenses and the provision of facilities to board members who are voting representatives on the Joint Organisation Board.

The adopted policy must comply with the Office of Local Government's Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities for mayors and councillors in NSW and should be designed to complement and supplement the expenses and facilities policies of Member Councils.

Because membership of the board of a Joint Organisation arises from a board member's role as Mayor (or in the case of any alternate or additional voting representatives such as the Deputy Mayor), the exercise of functions as board members in effect forms part of the exercise of the function which gave rise to the Board membership. This means that many of the expenses incurred by board members (e.g. travel expenses incurred to attend board meetings) may be recoverable under member council expenses and facilities policies or through the provision of a Member Council funded vehicle.

The Hunter Joint organisation's expenses and facilities policy is therefore framed with this in mind and is designed to cover any needs associated with the exercise by board members and chairpersons of Joint Organisation functions that are not otherwise covered under their Member Council expenses and facilities policy. The policy therefore contains provisions to prevent "double dipping" and board members are not entitled to make a claim under the Joint Organisation's expenses and facilities policy where the claim has been covered under a member council policy and vice versa.

Provisions

1. EXPENSES

(a) Conferences, Seminars and other Board approved activities:

The Joint Organisation will directly fund all costs associated with attendance at Conferences, Seminars and other activities when such attendance has received the prior approval of the Board.

Costs met by the Joint Organisation will include:

- (i) Conference / Seminar Registration fees including costs associated with official luncheons, dinners and tours relevant to the conference.
- (ii) Accommodation costs including breakfast, lunch and dinner unless such costs are included in any activity registration fee.
- (iii) Reasonable land line telephone costs during the duration of a Conference / Seminar / other approved activity.
- (iv) Accommodation, where necessary, for the night before or after a Conference / Seminar

/ other approved activity.

- (v) Accommodation expenses associated with the attendance of a spouse/partner at a Conference / Seminar / other approved activity when such attendance has been approved by the Board and generates a fee over and above a single room rate. Accommodation expenses will include breakfast and attendance in Conference Dinners and other such events where such events are an integral part of the Conference / Seminar / other approved activity.
- (vi) Accommodation, Conference, Seminar and other approved activities bookings / registrations and travel arrangements (if involving other than in a Board Member's member council supplied vehicle+ will be made by the Joint Organisation and in the name of the Joint Organisation. Payments will be made by corporate credit card or direct deposit.

Costs not met by the Joint Organisation during attendance at Conferences, Seminars and other Board approved activities will include:

- (i) Mini bar expenses and other, one-off personal purchases.

(b) Travel Expenses

- (i) Board Members must cover their own costs for accommodation and travel to and from meetings of the Joint Organisation Board and its Committees.
- (ii) Board Members must cover their own travel costs to a Conference / Seminar / other approved activity unless the venue for such an activity requires travel by air.
- (iii) Travel by air to an approved Conference, Seminar and other approved activity will be booked and paid for by the Joint Organisation and will be by economy class.

2. FACILITIES

(a) Voting Members

Voting Members of the Board of the Joint Organisation are to receive the benefit of the following Joint Organisation facilities:

- (i) Meals and refreshments associated with Joint Organisation Committee and Working Parties / Special Committee meetings.
- (ii) Meeting facilities for Joint Organisation, Committee and Working Parties / Special Committee meetings.
- (iii) Photocopying facilities at the Joint Organisation's offices for official purposes.

(b) Chairperson

In addition to those facilities provided to Board Members, the Chairperson is to receive the benefit of:

- (i) Word processing and administrative support provided by the Chief Executive Officer
 - (ii) Assistance with functions, organisation, meetings and the like for official purposes.
- (c) In addition to those facilities provided to the Members, a Deputy Chairperson (if appointed) is to receive the benefits of the Chairperson when acting in the office of Joint Organisation Chairperson

3. EXPENDITURE COVERED BY A MEMBER COUNCIL EXPENSES AND FACILITIES POLICY

The Hunter Joint Organisation Expenses and Facilities Policy does not cover items already addressed by a Member Council Expenses and Facilities Policy. No double payment of claims (either at a council or Joint Organisation level) should be sought or will be made.

4. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson (if one is appointed and when a claim is made by the Chairperson) and the Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for determining whether any claims in relation to the Policy are reasonable and within the guidelines set. Any Board Member dissatisfied with a determination received can request the matter be submitted to the Joint Organisation Board for consideration.

5. NON-VOTING MEMBERS

The Hunter Joint Organisation Expenses and Facilities Policy will apply to non-voting members of the Board as if they are voting members.