

3. Approach to expense policies

- Do you agree that the Remuneration Authority should supply a prototype expenses policy that will cover all councils and that councils should be able to adopt any or all of it to the upper limit of the metrics within the policy? **YES**
- Do you agree that each council's auditor should review their policy and also the application of the policy? **NO**

ADC agrees that a prototype expenses policy will provide a framework from which Council can easily identify the allowances and resources that are available and applicable to elected members during their term of office. It is Council's expectation that the expenses policy would continue to be submitted to the Remuneration Authority for approval every three years.

ADC disagrees that expenses policy compliance audits should be part of the role of local government auditors. While recognising that the intention is to ensure councils are following their own agreed policies, it is ADC's view that this proposal would impose significantly increased audit costs.

4. Provision of and allowances for information and communication technology and services

- Do you agree that it should be common policy for councils to provide the ICT hardware proposed above for all elected members? **NO**
- Do you agree that exemptions to this policy would be limited to exceptional circumstances?
- Do you agree that a proportion of the ongoing cost of the use of home internet and personal mobile phones should be reimbursed? **YES**
- If you disagree with either of these proposals, please give reasons and outline your alternatives.
- Do you agree with the "unusual circumstance" provision in para 48? **NO**

ADC disagrees with the proposal to provide all elected members a range of council-owned technology – ie mobile phone, tablet/laptop, internet connection, monitor and keyboard, printer etc. In Council's view, this appears to be an outdated approach that would impose significant added costs with little benefit to either party. Council would need to increase its technical support and management of the additional technology, and elected members may not want to replace the technology that is serving them well in their homes.

ADC has identified the need for elected members to be provided with tablets. This equipment is allocated at the start of the council term and full technical support is provided. Elected members agree that there are variations in 'council' use of phones and internet connections. They have indicated they want to continue to use their own phones and don't want to be burdened with a receipt system or having to distinguish between what's council use and what's home use. Instead, their preference is for the reimbursement system to be retained so they can continue to receive a contribution towards their internet, phone and printer use. ADC is seeking the Authority's approval to retain the reimbursement system.

ADC acknowledges that there are areas throughout the country where regular landline or mobile coverage is not available. In ADC's view, the costs associated with installing a connection should be met by the elected member; however ADC would support the Authority's intention to retain the existing policy whereby a council could make a case for the Authority's approval of a one-off connection, in special circumstances.

5. Travel time allowance

- Do you agree that the current policy on travel time allowance should be continued? **YES**
- If not, please state reasons for change.

6. Mileage claims

- Do you agree with the proposed change to the current 5000km rule? **NO**
- If not, what should it be and why?
- Do you agree with the proposal to retain the 30km rule in its current form? **NO**
- If not, what should this rule be?

ADC would like to see the 5,000km threshold removed and is of the opinion that elected members should be reimbursed at the rate of 0.74c/km for all travel on Council business. In ADC's view, it is unfair for an elected member to drop to 0.37c/km part way through a year as the reduction in travel reimbursement will not be reflected in the member's ongoing Council obligations.

If the Authority determines that 5,000km is to be a base, it is ADC's view that elected member travel reimbursement should be at the higher rate of 0.74c/km for at least the first 50% of the remaining distance they travel on council business.

ADC would also like to see the 30km threshold removed so that elected members living more than 15km from the Council can be reimbursed for the full round trip. In ADC's experience, elected members living just outside that radius (ie 2-3 km) won't claim mileage as the amounts paid are insignificant and not worth the time spent on administration. ADC notes that when elected members travel outside of the normal council meeting place on council business, the full mileage can be claimed. It is considered that removing the 30km threshold would better align to this.

ADC further submits that the Authority may wish to consider a mileage 'pool' whereby a fixed amount would be made available to each council to distribute.

7. Conclusion

Thank you for your consideration of this submission. Ashburton District Council will further submit on Part Three of the consultation document prior to 30 October 2017.



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