

Subject **TRAVEL - INTERSTATE AND OVERSEAS**

Description: This Policy has been developed by the Local Government Association for the guidance of member councils in planning interstate and overseas travel for Councillors and staff where Council funds will be used to finance the journey. It recognises that there are occasions when representatives will need to travel interstate or overseas to represent the interests of their local areas.

Objective: The thrust of this policy is that plans for any such travel should be transparent to the community and have an identifiable benefit to the local area through Council activity.

PART 1 - POLICY

Interstate travel

In most cases the need for interstate travel cannot be anticipated with as long a lead time as can reasonably be expected for overseas travel.

There are instances where councils are required to visit Canberra for official purposes such as meetings with federal parliamentarians and ministers. For purposes of this policy, the ACT is regarded as being within NSW.

Where Councillors and staff members propose to travel interstate, the proposals should be considered at an open council meeting through a report from the Mayor or General Manager.

Where the cost of the travel is not expected to exceed \$2,000 for transport, accommodation, and out of pocket reimbursement of expenses per person, no detail need be supplied other than a recommendation for approval that the visit is to take place.

Where the cost of the travel is expected to exceed \$2,000 for transport, accommodation, and out of pocket reimbursement of expenses per person, a detailed report should be provided outlining:

- ◆ who is to take part in the travel
- ◆ the objectives to be achieved in undertaking it, including an explanation of what community benefits will accrue to undertaking the visit
- ◆ details of costs, including any amounts expected to be reimbursed by participants

If the travel is to be sponsored by private enterprise, ICAC guidelines and reporting structures should be followed. Sponsored travel should be avoided as much as possible as it can lead to a situation of diminished objectivity, or the perception of diminished objectivity, or the recipient.

A detailed report should be included in the Annual Report in the year which the travel was undertaken, outlining how the travel's objectives were met and how the community benefited from it.

Overseas Travel

Proposals for overseas travel by Councillors and staff on council business should be documented in the annual management plan. The plan must be widely circulated in the Community. Community input about the proposed visit can therefore be considered as part of the management plan review and budget finalisation process.

PART 2 - EXEMPTIONS

Nil

PART 3 - CRITERIA

Proposals should indicate:

- ◆ who is planned to take part in the travel
- ◆ the objectives for undertaking it, including an explanation of what community benefits will accrue from the exercise, with an approximate budget
- ◆ detailed costs including a statement of any amounts expected to be reimbursed by the participants

If the visit is to be sponsored by private enterprise, ICAC guidelines and reporting structures should be followed and this should form part of the community reporting process.

A detailed report should be given in the Annual Report for the year in which the visit took place, outlining how the objectives were met and what quantifiable benefits will flow to the community.

The council should consider the above proposals in open meeting and resolve whether or not the travel is to take place.

Where exceptional cases arise and travel has to be undertaken at short notice, the above proposals should be put to Council for ENDORSEMENT. The outcomes, costs, and attendances should be included in the first Annual Report issued subsequent to the travel taking place.

PART 4 - OTHER MATTERS

Nil

Review: This policy is to be reviewed as necessary or every four (4) years in accordance with Section 165, Local Government Act, 1993.

Resolution No: 265/97; Reviewed September 03: 452/03; March 05: 94/05; Reviewed September 09; Reviewed and Revised February 2011 (45/11); Adopted without Change August 2013 (249/13).
