

MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL

**2009/10
ANNUAL REPORT**

INTRODUCTION

It is with a great deal of pleasure that we present the Annual Report of the Mid-Western Regional Council for the financial year ending on 30 June 2010. This has been a very positive year for the Council, with a highlight being our success in getting Aeropelican to bring scheduled airline service back to the Region. The resumption of daily air service between Sydney and Mudgee, which we lost at the end of 2008 when Airlink discontinued its service to regional Australia, have enhanced our Region's economy, provided a much needed travel option for our residents and brought with it the return of medical specialists who stopped visiting the Region when they could not travel by air.

Roads have been a significant focus of this Council. Key works included the replacement of the old timber bridge on Holyoak Avenue (Ulan Road), widening and stabilisation of a dangerously failed section of Nullo Mountain Road and completion of the design of a modern two-lane structure to replace the one-lane Carwell Creek Bridge. We obtained Black Spot funding for Spring Creek Road together with funding for a taxi shelter in Mudgee.

In addition to improving roads and constructing new footpaths Council focussed on maintaining our community facilities including parks and gardens, sporting grounds and playgrounds at a high standard to provide enjoyment for members of our community and visitors to our Region. We began building a \$9.5 million world-class Regional Sporting Complex at Glen Willow with construction of a new soccer amenities buildings, to be followed by a grandstand, netball amenities building and new playing fields. We spent more than \$1 million to upgrade the Mudgee Showground and we purchased a doctor's house in Rylstone to help attract and retain medical practitioners in this area.

During the past two years Council has taken major strides in its capital works programs, including an increase of more than \$3 million above previous levels of service in road construction and maintenance. This year an updated Road Strategic Plan identified an urgent gap of \$1.6 million in funding required to maintain roads to a minimum condition, and Council initiated decisive steps to close that gap. The five-year Strategic Plan continues to make roads a Council priority with the goal of getting all our roads to a standard that you as a community and the travelling public can be proud of and travel over with comfort and ease

A major accomplishment during this financial year was the completion, after extensive community consultation, of a Comprehensive Land Use Strategy which was forwarded to the Department of Planning for endorsement. This document sets the strategic direction for land use planning that will determine how our Region grows and develops over the next 25 years. The Strategy will form the foundation for a Comprehensive Local Environmental Plan (LEP) that Council began formulating this year to replace the three separate LEPs now covering our Region. We plan to place this Comprehensive LEP on public exhibition in late 2010 and encourage you to read it and make your suggestions about what it should contain because we want you to be involved in how your community will grow and develop.

Council also commenced a comprehensive review of the full suite of Development Control Plans (DCPs) that apply to the Region. This review will form the basis of a new Comprehensive DCP which will commence to operate with the new Comprehensive LEP.

Although plans to create a new regional library on the Cudgegong Southbank site were put on hold pending resolution of funding issues, Council's library system provided our community's residents with an exciting range of new and expanded services including a Broadband for Seniors program conducted in partnership with U3A that was recognised as an Australian role model for how to introduce seniors to on-line technology and tutor them on the use of the Internet.

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Without doubt staff are this Council's most important resource, and it is with pleasure we are able to report that after a prolonged recruitment process Council was able to fill its approved weeds inspector positions. We are very proud to say this Council can boast a committed group of staff who work hard for the community to ensure we can deliver the best possible service at the least cost.

This Annual Report reviews the Council service to our community during the 2009/10 financial year. We live in exciting and changing times and it is important that an organisation like ours is responsive to community needs and expectations and delivers good quality services. Please enjoy the read.

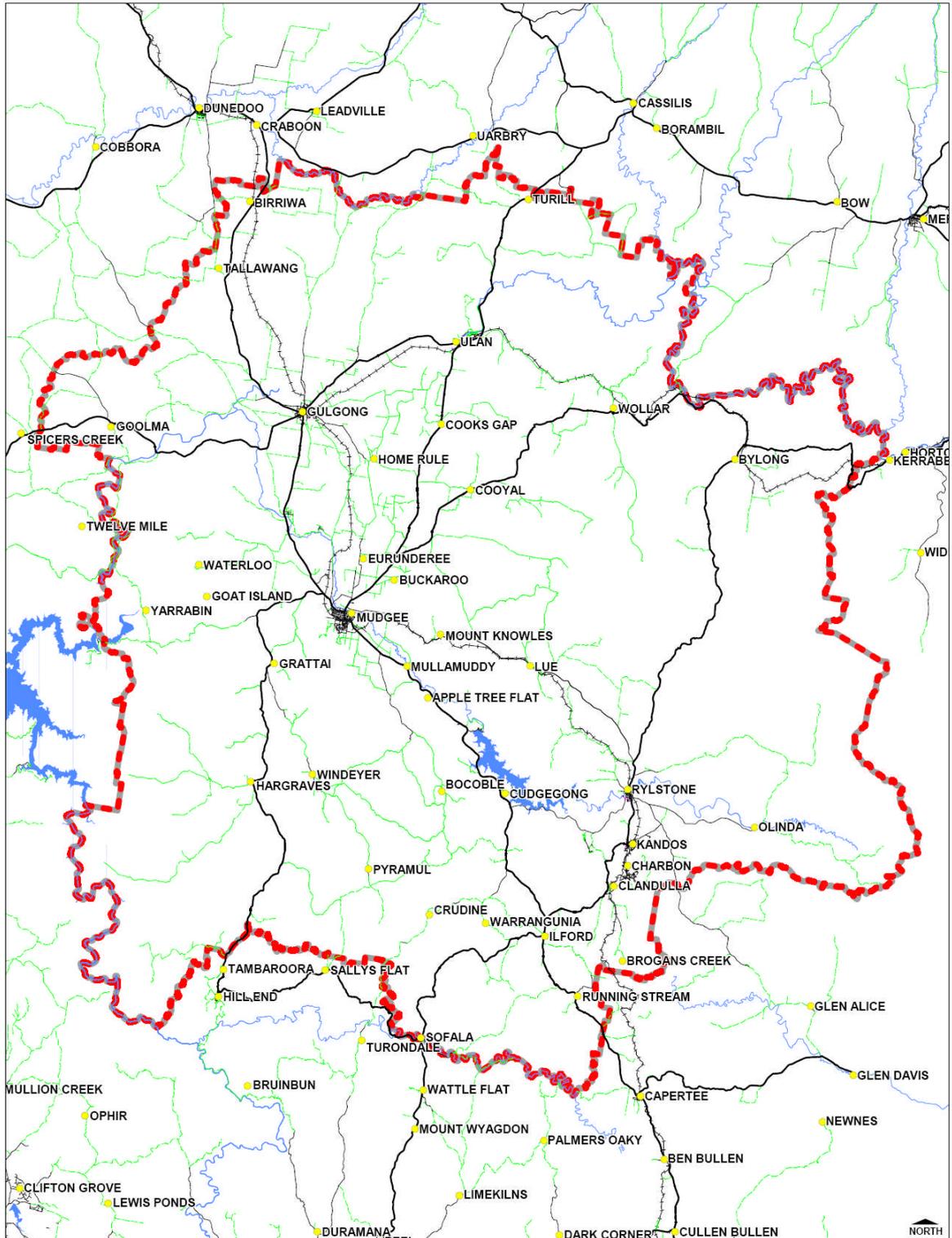


**CR DES KENNEDY
MAYOR**



**WARWICK L BENNETT
GENERAL MANAGER**

Mid-Western Regional Local Government Area



Part A

ACHIEVEMENTS

ROADS AND BRIDGES

- Completed the replacement of the old timber bridge on Hollyoake Avenue
- Updated Road strategic plan the identified an urgent gap of \$1.6m in funding required to maintain roads in a minimum condition
- Design of Carwell Creek Bridge completed
- Completed fair value review of all roads and bridges
- Obtained funding for a taxi shelter in Mudgee together with Black Spot funding for Spring Creek Road.
- Upgraded failed section of Nullo Mountain road with widening and stabilisation to improve safety and access to that area

CARPARKING, CYCLEWAYS, STREETSCAPING

- Completed construction of new pathways in Bellevue Rd, Inglis, Denison, Mortimer and Bayley Streets

WATER SUPPLY

- Work commenced on lowering the intake works at the Rylstone Dam to improve security of supply with access to the last 25% of water in the dam (down to 2-3%).
- Dam Safety emergency plans updated
- Design options for improving safety of Redbank Dam completed
- Work commenced on the construction of a Turkey's Nest Dam at Gulgong to improve security of supply

SEWERAGE

- Design substantially completed for the Mudgee Sewer Augmentation with tenders called for the construction of the pipeline from the Putta Bucca Pump Station to the new site and back to the river
- Tenders for the design of the Sewer Augmentation to service Rylstone, Kandos, Charbon and Clandulla let
- Closed circuit television (CCTV) inspections of aging sewer mains completed to assist in prioritising the replacement of these mains
- User pays pricing for sewer services determined

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Design installation and commissioning of new recycling sorting plant.
- Construction of bunded receivable bay for commingled recycling.
- Supply and delivery of 240L kerb-side recycling bins to residents.
- Upgrade of Home Rule Waste Transfer Station including road works and storage bays
- Levelling and shaping as part of remediation works for the old Putta Bucca landfill site.
- Interim capping and remediation works for the Kandos waste transfer station.
- Upgrade works to Ilford waste transfer station including road works and storage bays.

ACHIEVEMENTS

STORMWATER

- Negotiations commenced for the purchase of land to enable construction of a retention basin upstream of the railway line in Mudgee
- Various local drainage issues addressed with construction of local pipe drainage (including Interact Park)

AIRPORT

- Re-introduction of passenger plane service to Sydney
- Extended the safety and security fencing by around 1300 metres
- Connection of three phase power

SALEYARDS

- Upgrade of truck wash
- Upgrade of fencing in the day pens

CEMETERIES

- Rural Cemeteries – Additional maintenance undertaken at all rural cemeteries

CORPORATE BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE

Corporate and Community Buildings

- Building strategic asset management plan completed and adopted by Council

Mudgee Showground

- Over \$1m spent on upgrading the Mudgee Showground including the construction of a 16 stall stable complex, new sheep and poultry pavilions, revitalisation of the main grass arena with underground drip irrigation system, a new sand arena for horse events, new fencing and landscaping as well as day yards.
- Council was successful in obtaining a grant from The Premier, the Hon. Kristina Keneally, MP, of \$40,000 under the State Government's 2009 Community Building Partnership Program towards the construction of the new stable facilities at the Mudgee Showground (Project Number: 2494)

SWIMMING POOLS

- Gulgong Pool – A new pool cleaner was purchased. A new chlorinator installed.
- Mudgee Pool – A new pool cleaner was purchased.
- Kandos Pool – A new pool cleaner was purchased.
- Pool Investigation study was undertaken to outline what is required to maintain and keep the pools running.

ACHIEVEMENTS

PARKS AND RESERVES

Public Toilets

- Public Toilet Upgrades – Council Rylstone cemetery
- Demolition of Darton Park toilets at Kandos

Playgrounds

- Bellevue Estate – a fence was installed around the playground

Passive Reserves

- Robertson Park, Mudgee – The cenotaph received an upgrade. This included clearing of vegetation, extending turfed areas, seat installation and widening of the concrete access path.

Active Parks / Sports Grounds

- Glen Willow – commencement of the works for the new soccer amenities building, grandstand, netball amenities building and new playing fields
- Kandos Sports Ground irrigation was upgraded

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Comprehensive Land Use Strategy

- Council has completed the Comprehensive Land Use Strategy and has forwarded the strategy to the Department of Planning for endorsement. This document sets that strategic direction for land use planning in the region and forms the foundation for the Comprehensive Local Environmental Plan that Council is currently formulating.
- A planning proposal to rezone land near Ulan to allow for heavy industrial development to service the local mining industry was prepared by Council and has also been sent to the Department of Planning for finalisation.

Development Control Plans and Policies

- Council has commenced a comprehensive review of the full suite of development control plans that apply to the region. This review will form the basis of the new comprehensive Development Control Plan which will commence to operate with the new Local Environmental Plan.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

- The publication of the Department of Planning Performance Monitoring for 2008/09 has provided an opportunity to benchmark the performance of the Planning and Development Department against other Councils across the state and more particularly other Group 4 Councils within the Central West. The Report indicates that Council has performed well in minimising processing times for development applications, particularly in relation to residential applications. It also indicates a high level of productivity in relation to development assessment.

ACHIEVEMENTS

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Council continued the school vegetable garden program. The program was successfully run at the Mudgee Public School in a collaborative partnership of local community groups and businesses. The program involved all Year 5 and 6 children in the establishment a vegetable garden and learning about environmental sustainability. A new program has commenced at Goolma School.
- Best Practice Erosion and Sediment Control Project – This project was grant funded by the Hunter Central River Catchment Management Authority and involved the establishment of Best Practice on ground erosion and sediment control measures along the Ulan Wollar and the Wollar Road.
- Red Hill Propagation Shed – this was a collaborative project with the Red Hill Education Centre and involved the construction of a propagation shed at Red Hill for the propagation of Native Species.
- Work was commenced on the Lawson Creek regeneration project.
- Green Team Visits – In collaboration with the Central West Catchment Management Authority the Green Team visited the region and undertook bush regeneration work in Rylstone, Mudgee and Gulgong.

HEALTH

- A total of 163 food premises inspection were undertaken over the year in accordance with the State requirements.

LIBRARY

- Further expansion of online database subscriptions to provide greater reference access to customers at home and through the library
- The library hosted a wide range of cultural events and workshops including book launches
- Continued delivery of the Born to Read lapsit program and the GOAL (Grade Ones at the Library) program
- Continued delivery of the Summer Reading Program. 599 children took part in the 2009-10 program "Read on the Wild Side".
- Delivery of subject seminars for HSC students and expansion of the Headspace program for High School students (Headspace)
- Broadband for Seniors partnership with U3A delivering tutoring in online technology for seniors
- Planning for a new or expanded regional library building has continued with significant community consultation
- Continued expansion of the Navigator hand-held talking book device, specifically designed for the vision impaired

REGULATORY CONTROL

- Council continued with its programme of parking control activities within Mudgee.
- After a prolonged recruitment process Council was finally able to fill its approved weeds inspectorial positions in line with budgetary approval.

ACHIEVEMENTS

COMMUNITY SERVICES

- The Reading the Rivers temporary art exhibition and Grand Parade was delivered in September, highlighting the work of school children from across the region
- In January, Council became a member of Orana Arts Inc.
- A draft strategic plan was developed for the Kandos Bicentennial Museum
- A successful planning day was held for HACC services auspiced by Council (Home Modification & Maintenance, Community Transport, Meals on Wheels and Host Family Respite Care)
- Council assisted in the coordination of NAIDOC Week celebrations and White Ribbon Day
- Highly successful Seniors Week and youth programs were developed
- Continued support of a scholarship for a local student to attend Charles Sturt University
- Worked in partnership with the University of Wollongong's Graduate School of Management on a program to bring trainee doctors to the region
- Through a federal government grant, a residence to attract and retain medical practitioners in the Rylstone region has been purchased
- In partnership with Xstrata Coal, Council began a three year Youth Services Officer program
- Council continues to work with the community on a number of Social and Cultural Plan initiatives – this includes cultural, community and youth programs and events.

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES

- Improved security at Council's telecommunications facilities that has seen a significant decrease in the level of vandalism
- Investigation of options into the replacement / upgrade of council record system undertaken with a proposed course of action determined.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Industrial land developed on Depot Road Mudgee and land now available for sale, with Council accepting an offer on the first parcel
- Residential land development in Lions Drive well progressed with physical works and expected to be on the market in 1st qtr of 2010/11
- Further land sales of surplus land throughout the region finalised

GOVERNANCE

- Council by-election held on 19 June 2010 to fill vacancy created by the passing of Cr Loneragan
- Community News continued to be published on the Friday before each Council meeting, with additional issues when no Council meetings were scheduled in January and July, for a total 22 times during the year.
- Local Government Best Practice Review conducted in February 2009 and responded to during the year
- All statutory reports were completed by the due dates
- Ten Council Meetings held
- Council's Standing Committees (Planning & Development, Strategic, Community Services and Corporate Services met nine times

Part B

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State of the Environment Report 2009/10

Council is involved in the preparation of the State of the Environment Report on a regional basis in partnership with the Central West Catchment Authority and 17 other Local Councils. This is Council's third year of involvement in the regionally based report with Council's Environment Officer being a representative on the steering committee for the preparation of the Report. Working together as a region enables the sharing of data, ideas and knowledge on environmental practices, sustainability reporting and innovation, the success of collaborative programs and the strengthening of regional links. The Regional State of the Environment Report will be completed early in November 2010.

Legal Proceedings

Council expended \$149,830 on legal costs during the period.

Of that amount, \$138,411 related to the cost of obtaining legal advice/opinion in relation to various matters and not in relation to legal proceedings taken by or against the Council.

In addition, Council expended \$148,456 during the period in recovering outstanding rates and charges. These costs are debited as a charge against individual rate assessments. Council recovered \$145,794 of such costs during the period.

Summarised below are details of legal proceedings in which the Council was involved, together with the results of those proceedings and the nature and amount of legal costs incurred:

MATTER	NATURE OF EXPENSE	EXPENSE AMOUNT	OUTCOME
Appeal to Land & Environment Court against Council refusal of subdivisions application	Court Action	\$100	Court found in favour of applicant – development application approved.
Appeal to Administrative Decisions Tribunal regarding rating classification	ADT Action	\$11,319	Ongoing

Senior Staff

Council effectively had one senior staff position during the year, that being the General Manager.

The total amount paid in respect of the employment of senior staff during the year (including salary, performance bonus payments, fringe benefits tax, housing assistance, private use of a Council motor vehicle and employer's superannuation contributions) was \$245,767.92.

The total remuneration comprised in the remuneration package of the General Manager was \$245,389.47.

Mayoral and Councillor Fees

The Mayoral Fee for the period was set at \$19,790 while the Councillor Fee was set at \$9,060. A total amount of \$79,256 was paid in Councillor Fees while an amount of \$19,790 was paid in Mayoral Fees.

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Overseas Visits

During the year there were no overseas visits undertaken.

Councillor Expenses and Facilities

The Council has an adopted policy on the provision of facilities and the payment of Councillors expenses and a copy of this policy is appended.

An amount of \$127,538 was expended on supporting the elected Council through the provision of these facilities and the payment of these expenses. This figure includes:

Council meeting expenses	\$33,563
Councillor Representational/lobbying expenses	\$9,584
Mayoral vehicle running expenses	\$6,699
Material & consumables, printing and stationary, delivery of business papers	\$11,901
Lease payments (mayoral vehicle & office equipment)	\$17,218
Provision of Office Equipment	\$21,386
Telephone Calls made by Councillors	\$2,120
Conferences and Seminars	\$12,587
Training and Skill Development	\$12,480
Interstate Visits	Nil
Overseas Visits	Nil
Spouse, partner or accompanying person	Nil
Child Care	Nil

Bush Fire Hazard Reduction

Hazard reduction is a priority in the Cudgegong District. Hazard reduction works were undertaken by land managers on the Cudgegong Bush Fire Management Committee, though works were limited by unfavourable weather conditions. Hazard reduction burns were undertaken in National Parks and on crown land and a program of slashing, grading and chemical works was undertaken by Council.

An extensive programme of Community Engagement activities including meetings and individual property visits was targeted at residents in the highest risk rural areas to increase their awareness and better prepare them to survive a bush fire.

Private Works

There were no resolutions passed during the year in accordance with the provisions of Section 67(2)(b) of the Local Government Act 1993 relating to Council subsidising the cost of any works carried out on private lands.

Council completed 61 private works projects ranging from grading of gravel drive ways to pothole patching. Council did not undertake any major individual private works jobs during 2009/10.

Grants

During this period, Council made contributions/donations amounting to \$344,000.

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Contracts Awarded During the Year

The following contracts were awarded by Council during the year:

Contractor	Goods/Services Provided	Amount (Inc. GST)
V& M Bucan	Kandos Skate Park	\$84,645
M Collins & Sons	Glen Willow Redevelopment	\$198,000
Hi Tech	Glen Willow Redevelopment	\$172,706
Water Dynamics	Mudgee Showground Arena	\$167,008
	Irrigation & Refurbishment	
Central West Surveying & Civil	Industrial Subdivision Lions Drive	\$491,084
Troy Kurtz Earthworks	Mudgee Showground Earthworks	\$62,474
Backyards Plus	Mudgee Showground Stables	\$122,050
SuperShed Australia	Mudgee Showground Sheep Pavilion	\$85,748
Donnelly Mining and Civil P/L	Rylstone River Pumping Station Construction	\$1,053,517
ProMinent Fluid Controls P/L	Gulgong Water Treatment Plant Polymer Dosing System	\$59,031
ELH	Hollyoake Timber Bridge Replacement	\$137,366
Max Walker Earthmoving	Lions Drive Road Widening	\$146,410
Sustainable Turf	No 1 Field Glen Willow Sporting Complex	\$614,819 ex
CCA Projects	Design & Construct 1000 Seat Grandstand Glen Willow Sporting Complex	\$4,255,000 ex
Court Craft Aust	Netball Court All Weather Surfacing Glen Willow Sporting Complex	\$215,051.31 ex
Rayner Construction	Mudgee Showground Concrete Slab for Sheep Pavilion ,	\$56,810
Best Western Petroleum	Mudgee and Rylstone Depot Fuel Tank upgrade including ground water monitoring wells,	\$59,000
NSW Water	Rylstone Kandos and Villages Sewerage Augmentation - Consultancy for Investigation and Design	\$958,889
EL Civil Engineering P/L	Mudgee Sewerage Augmentation - Supply, Construction, Pressure Testing of Pipelines and Associated Works	\$2,739,107.10

Freedom of Information (FOI) and Privacy

Council is committed to the principles of open government and makes every effort to provide access by members of the public to the Council's decision making process. Wherever possible, documents are provided to applicants without charge.

As a result of this approach, one (1) FOI application was received during the period. This compares favourably to the 1998/99 period, during which Council only received one formal FOI application, the 1999/00 and 2000/01 periods, during which no applications were received, the 2001/02 period where only one application was received, the 2002/03 period where no applications were received, the 2003/04 period where one application was received, the 2004/05 period where three applications were received, the 2005/06 period where no applications were received, the 2006/07 period where one application was received, the 2007/08 period where two applications were received and the 2008/09 period where three applications were received..

Council has adopted a Privacy Management Plan and complies with the Privacy Code of Practice for Local Government and any Directions issued by the Privacy Commissioner.

Human Resources Activities

Towards the end of 2009 calendar year, Human Resources co-ordinated Council's employee opinion survey which was followed up at the start of 2010 with a series of employee focus groups looking at communication, co-operation, performance and recognition.

With performance management a key focus area from the employee opinion survey, targeted training was conducted for supervisors and team leaders in managing performance with a more formal program to follow in the new year.

A new employee induction program was developed and will be implemented for all new employees from July 2010. This program has been designed to provide new employees with all the information they need about working at Mid-Western Regional Council and participation will form an integral part of the employee's probation period.

Learning and development took a new turn in 2009/10 with every employee receiving a memo outlining their identified training activities for the following 12 months. A significant proportion of the training budget was set aside to meet changes in RTA requirements and Council's commitment of providing first aid training to as many employees as possible, with almost 30% of the budget being spent on RTA required Traffic Control training alone in 2009/10.

Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan

Council is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer committed to providing a work environment free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation or vilification, where each employee has the opportunity to progress to the extent of their abilities. Council's EEO objectives are to provide:

- Fair practices in the workplace;
- Management decisions without bias;
- Recognition of and respect for the social and cultural backgrounds of all employees, Councillors and customers;
- Employment practices which create employee satisfaction and commitment.

To achieve these objectives during the year, Council completed the following initiatives:

- Developed a new EEO Management Plan with the view to creating an integrated approach to EEO across Council;
- As part of the 2010 LGMA Management Challenge, conducted a survey of all female employees of Council to determine their views on general conditions of employment, recruitment and selection, learning and development, work organisation, promotion and transfer, etc. The survey results will be used to put in place programs and initiatives directly aimed at meeting EEO objectives;
- Collected and analysed workforce statistics to better understand the gender mix of Council's workforce for future workforce planning requirements;
- Reviewed recruitment and selection and position evaluation procedures to ensure processes were non-discriminatory and contributed to EEO outcomes as outlined above;
- Developed bullying and harassment training which has been included in new employee induction and will be rolled out for all existing employees from July 2010;
- Utilised data from the Skills Audit conducted in 2009 to formulate the 2010/11 Training Plan ensuring all learning and development activities are linked to the employee, Council and customer needs.

Services That Promoted Access for People with Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds

Demographic statistics from the 2006 Census indicate that approximately 2.7% of the population speak a language other than English at home and 2.7% of the population state that they are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

Programs undertaken or supported by Council include:

- All Council's Home and Community Care Services funded through the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care have special policy statements on services for people with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Council's Community Services Centre offers, on an annual basis, meeting room facilities for people from diverse backgrounds to meet with representatives from the Department of Immigration.
- Mid-Western Regional Council Library provides access to the collections of the State Library of New South Wales and enables members of the community to loan boxes of non-English language books.
- Council's Social Plan includes sections on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse members of the community and Aboriginal members of the community.
- Mid-Western Regional Family Day Care Service has one Indigenous carer in Mudgee and another four carers in Wellington who are working with the Barnardos Better Futures Program that caters for Aboriginal children.
- Mudgee Child Care Centre promotes inclusive practice and currently has children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal backgrounds enrolled at the Centre.

Services to Cater for the Needs of Children and Young People

The following services were provided by Council for children and young people in the local government area in 2009/10:

- Family Day Care services offering quality child care for children aged 6 weeks to 12 years of age, in the private homes of registered Family Day Carers.
- Youth Services Officer program, in partnership with Xstrata Coal
- Youth Week program delivered with activities in Mudgee, Gulgong and Rylstone/Kandos
- Support for the continuation of the Mid-Western Regional Youth Council
- A full range of library services through branch libraries in Gulgong, Kandos and Mudgee
- Mobile library service to all village schools in the region, including Bylong Upper, Goolma, Hargraves, Ilford, Lue, Ulan, Windeyer and Wollar
- Bookworms story-telling and craft activities programs for pre-schoolers delivered through the Gulgong, Kandos and Mudgee branches
- A range of storytelling and craft activities for children during school holidays
- Born to Read lap-sit program for babies and toddlers
- Summer Reading Program delivered throughout the Region with 599 participants
- Visits to local schools to provide briefings on services and programs

Delegated Functions

There were no functions delegated by Council to external bodies during the period.

Access and Equity

The following provides a list of the activities that Council completed in 2008/09 that promoted services and access to services for people with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and to those with other access needs:

- Mid-Western Regional Council has two established Access Committees (one covering the Mudgee and Gulgong areas; the other covering the Rylstone and Kandos areas) that provide advice to Council on access issues
- Council auspices a range of HACC funded services such as Host Family Respite Care, Meals on Wheels and Home Modification & Maintenance
- Community Transport enables the elderly or those with a disability to have comfortable access to medical or social appointments
- Council's Community Services facilitates space for the transcribing of the Mudgee Guardian on to tapes for the vision impaired
- Council supports a range of special events and community services such as NAIDOC Week
- A range of working parties and groups exist in our community with support and advocacy from Council, including Interagency, Youth Network, Aged Services, Disability Services, Children and Family and People Against Violence
- Remote access to library reference services has been expanded through the provision of additional databases
- Remote access to skill based tutorials has been provided online (YourTutor and Computer School)
- The Mid-Western Regional Council Library provides access to large print books and talking books that can be of assistance to the visually impaired
- The library has expanded its collection of Navigators (hand-held devices that store talking books for the sight-impaired)
- Mobile Library Service assists housebound library patrons to access materials as well as providing a library service to village communities
- In partnership with U3A the library has been successful in delivering Internet training for seniors

Equity in Council's Services

Evidence of Council's commitment to equitably providing services to all residents is provided in the following programs delivered in 2009/10:

- Youth Week events were arranged in various locations throughout the region and transport was also available to travel to events
- Seniors Week events were celebrated throughout the Region
- Community email bulleting is distributed to recipients throughout the Council area
- HACC funded community services auspiced by Council have equity of access statements
- Mid-Western Regional Council Library offers free library membership to all people living in the local government area through its branches at Gulgong, Kandos and Mudgee
- A Mobile Library Service travels to a number of villages in the region
- The Mobile Library also offers a housebound service to the frail-aged who are unable to visit the library branches
- The library has an online catalogue and a number of online database services available for searching over the Internet
- The library offers free Internet access to the Internet at its three branches at Gulgong, Kandos and Mudgee as well as the Council office in Rylstone

Stormwater Management Services

Council has not levied an annual charge for stormwater management services during the year.

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Planning Agreements

Company	Effective	Purpose	Amount	Due Date	Paid
Wilpinjong Coal Pty Ltd	March 2006	Lump Sum - Coal Shipment	\$ 450,000	Payable prior to the first shipment of coal from the land	Yes
		Annual Contribution - Community Infrastructure	\$ 800,000	\$40,000 per annum for 20 years, with the first instalment due on the anniversary of the first loading and dispatch of coal.	3 of 20
		Annual Contribution - Road Maintenance	\$30,000 per annum	\$30,000 per annum for the life of the mining operation, with the first instalment due on the anniversary of the first loading and dispatch of coal.	3 of 3
		Annual Contribution - Bus Routes	\$ 60,000	\$20,000 per annum for three years	3 of 3
Moolarben Coal Pty Ltd	February 2008	Lump Sum - Open Cut Coal	\$ 1,000,000	Payable in three equal annual instalments, with the first payment due within 7 days of first loading and dispatch of coal produced from the open cut operation.	1 of 3
		Lump Sum - Underground Coal	\$ 300,000	Payable in three equal annual instalments, with the first payment due within 7 days of first loading and dispatch of coal produced from the underground operation.	1 of 3
		Lump Sum - Road Maintenance	\$ 1,000,000	Payable in three equal annual instalments, with the first payment due within 7 days of the commencement of construction.	2 of 3
		Annual Contribution - Road Maintenance	\$ 1,250,000	\$62,500 per annum for 20 years, with the first instalment due on the anniversary of the first loading and dispatch of coal.	1 of 20
		Annual Contribution - Community Infrastructure	\$ 1,000,000	\$100,000 per annum for 10 years, with the first instalment due on the anniversary of the first loading and dispatch of coal.	1 of 10

Commercial Interests and Competitive Neutrality

Council did not hold the controlling interest in any one enterprise, nor was it party to any partnerships, co-operatives or other joint ventures during the year.

Council was involved in the following organisations:

Organisation/Contractor	Purpose	Amount
Statecover Mutual Limited	Council holds a partly paid share in Statecover Mutual Ltd, a company providing workers compensation cover for Council. Council has a contingent liability to contribute further equity in the event of either the erosion of the capital base of the company or increases in the prudential requirements of APRA.	N/A

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Council operates the following businesses:

Category 1:

- Water Supply
- Sewer Service

Category 2:

- Private Works
- Livestock Selling Centre (Saleyards)
- Mudgee Child Care Centre (Council ceased operating this facility on 25 June 2010).

Council has complied with the principles of competitive neutrality in relation to pricing structures, taxation equivalents, Council rates and charges, loan debt guarantees fees and corporate taxation equivalents. Council had not received any competitive neutrality complaints. Council has adopted a complaints handling policy that incorporates a mechanism for dealing with competitive neutrality complaints.

For financial information regarding Council's business activities please refer to the Special Purpose Financial Reports attached.

Companion Animals Act

Council employs one officer full time to enforce the provisions of the Companion Animal legislation. This officer also attends to after-hours stock impounding.

During the year, Pound Data Collection Returns and Data relating to Dog Attacks were lodged with the Department of Local Government.

During the year, Council held Discount Dog Days as a means of encouraging persons to have their dogs and cats microchipped. In addition, staff are working with the local branch of the RSPCA regarding foster care and advertising of impounded animals.

Council has three (3) off-leash areas, located at glen Willow, Sportsfield, Pitts Lane, Mudgee, Peoples Park, Gulgong and the Rylstone Show Ground.

The Department of Local Government provided \$6,876 for Animal Management Services to Council. Additionally, \$3,787 was received from stock impounding fees, animal release fees, fines, animal sales and other revenue associated with the management of companion animals. These funds contributed to the management and control of companion animals in the area as follows:

Expenditure	
Salaries, overtime, allowances, etc	\$62,335
Materials and consumables	11,742
Plant operating costs	24,235
Telephones, Electricity & Energy, Contractors, Printing & Stationary, Waste tipping expenses, Water usage	5,492
Employee and Creditors overheads	22,026
Total	\$125,830

Attachment

	POLICY	ADOPTED C/M 17/2/10 Minute No. 09/10
	Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities to Councillors	REVIEW: Aug 10 FILE No A0110001

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there is accountability and transparency in the reimbursement of expenses incurred or to be incurred by councillors and that the facilities provided to assist Councillors to carry out their civic duties are reasonable.

OBJECTIVES AND COVERAGE

The objective of this policy is to provide a guide to Councillor's expenses and facilities, and the process for paying expenses in a way that can be properly recorded, reported and audited.

The policy applies to all Councillors. The Mayor is entitled to specific additional facilities.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

This policy will be included in the Council's Annual Report. In addition, the total amount of money spent during the relevant financial year through the application of this policy will be reported to the Council quarterly and in the Annual Report.

LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS

Local Government Act 1993

The relevant provisions of the Local Government Act 1993 are set out below:

Section 252 Payment of expenses and provision of facilities

- (1) Within 5 months after the end of each year, a council must adopt a policy concerning the payment of expenses incurred or to be incurred by, and the provision of facilities to, the mayor, the deputy mayor (if there is one) and the other councillors in relation to discharging the functions of civic office.
- (2) The policy may provide for fees payable under this Division to be reduced by an amount representing the private benefit to the mayor or a councillor of a facility provided by the council to the mayor or councillor.
- (3) A council must not pay any expenses incurred or to be incurred by, or provide any facilities to, the mayor, the deputy mayor (if there is one) or a councillor otherwise than in accordance with a policy under this section.
- (4) A council may from time to time amend a policy under this section.

- (5) A policy under this section must comply with the provisions of this Act, the regulations and any relevant guidelines issued under section 23A.

Section 253 Requirements before policy concerning expenses and facilities can be adopted or amended

- (1) A council must give public notice of its intention to adopt or amend a policy for the payment of expenses or provision of facilities allowing at least 28 days for the making of public submissions.
- (2) Before adopting or amending the policy, the council must consider any submissions made within the time allowed for submissions and make any appropriate changes to the draft policy or amendment.
- (3) Despite subsections (1) and (2), a council need not give public notice of a proposed amendment to its policy for the payment of expenses or provision of facilities if the council is of the opinion that the proposed amendment is not substantial.
- (4) Within 28 days after adopting a policy or making an amendment to a policy for which public notice is required to be given under this section, a council is to forward to the Director-General:
- (a) a copy of the policy or amendment together with details of all submissions received in accordance with subsection (1), and
 - (b) a statement setting out, for each submission, the council's response to the submission and the reasons for the council's response, and
 - (c) a copy of the notice given under subsection (1).
- (5) A council must comply with this section when proposing to adopt a policy each year in accordance with section 252 (1) even if the council proposes to adopt a policy that is the same as its existing policy.

Section 254 Decision to be made in open meeting

The council or a council committee all the members of which are councillors must not close to the public that part of its meeting at which a policy for the payment of expenses or provision of facilities is adopted or amended, or at which any proposal concerning those matters is discussed or considered.

Section 12 (What information is publicly available) provides that the public is able to inspect during office hours at the council, and at no charge, the current version and the immediately preceding version of the council's expenses and facilities policy. The public are also entitled to a copy of the policy either free of charge or on payment of a reasonable copying charge.

Section 23A (Director General's guidelines) makes provision for the Director-General of the Department of Local Government to prepare, adopt or vary guidelines that relate to the exercise by a council of any of its functions. It also requires that a council must take the relevant guidelines into consideration before exercising any of its functions.

Section 428(2)(f) (Annual Reports) requires a council to include in its annual report: The total amount of money expended during the year on mayoral fees and councillor fees, the council's policy on the provision of facilities for use by councillors and the payment of councillors' expenses, together with a statement of the total amount of money expended during the year on the provision of such facilities and the payment of such expenses.

In addition **Section 428(r)** requires that councils must report on any other information required by the regulations.

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005

The relevant provisions of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 are set out below:

Clause 217 (Additional information for inclusion in annual reports) states in part:

- (1) For the purposes of section 428(2)(r) of the Act, an annual report of a council is to include the following information:
- (a) details (including the purpose) of overseas visits undertaken during the year by councillors, council staff or other persons representing the council (including visits sponsored by other organisations).
 - (a1) details of the total cost during the year of the payment of the expenses of, and the provision of facilities to, councillors in relation to their civic functions (as paid by the council, reimbursed to the councillor or reconciled with the councillor), including separate details on the total cost of each of the following:
 - (i) the provision during the year of dedicated office equipment allocated to councillors on a personal basis, such as laptop computers, mobile telephones and landline telephones and facsimile machines installed in councillors' homes (including equipment and line rental costs and internet access costs but not including call costs),
 - (ii) telephone calls made by councillors, including calls made from mobile telephones provided by the council and from landline telephones and facsimile services installed in councillors' homes,
 - (iii) the attendance of councillors at conferences and seminars,
 - (iv) the training of councillors and the provision of skill development for councillors,
 - (v) interstate visits undertaken during the year by councillors while representing the council, including the cost of transport, the cost of accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses,
 - (vi) overseas visits undertaken during the year by councillors while representing the council, including the cost of transport, the cost of accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses,
 - (vii) the expenses of any spouse, partner (whether of the same or the opposite sex) or other person who accompanied a councillor in the performance of his or her civic functions, being expenses payable in accordance with the *Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities for Mayors and Councillors for Local Councils in NSW* prepared by the Director-General from time to time,
 - (viii) expenses involved in the provision of care for a child of, or an immediate family member of, a councillor, to allow the councillor to undertake his or her civic functions,

Clause 403 (Payment of expenses and provision of facilities) states:

A policy under section 252 of the Local Government Act 1993 must not include any provision enabling a council:

- (a) to pay any councillor an allowance in the nature of a general expense allowance, or
- (b) to make a motor vehicle owned or leased by the council available for the exclusive or primary use or disposition of a particular councillor other than a mayor.

OTHER GOVERNMENT POLICY PROVISIONS

DLG guidelines for payment of expenses and provision of facilities

This policy takes into account the following Circulars:

- Circular 05108 - Legal assistance for councillors and council employees.
- Circular 02134 - Unauthorised use of council resources.

These guidelines replace Circular 04160 Policy on payment of facilities to the mayor, deputy mayor and other councillors.

Model Code of Conduct

This is consistent with the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW, Department of Local Government, and Council's Code of Conduct which implements the Model Code.

The part of the Model Code headed 'Use of Council resources' is particularly relevant to s252 policies, and is implemented by the Council's Code of Conduct.

ICAC publications

Councillors should also be aware of and take account of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) publication No Excuse for Misuse, preventing the misuse of council resources (Guidelines 2), November 2002.

This publication is available on the ICAC website at www.icac.nsw.gov.au.

APPROVAL ARRANGEMENTS

Approval for attendance at conferences, seminars and the like under this policy will, subject to other decisions of Council, where possible, be approved by Council. On those occasions where this is not possible the approval will be given jointly by the Mayor and General Manager (in cases where this relates to the Mayor, the approval will be given jointly by the Deputy Mayor and General Manager) – following which a report will be presented to the next Council Meeting to confirm the action taken.

PART 2: PAYMENT OF EXPENSES

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Payment of expenses generally

Allowances and expenses

Council does not provide general allowances to councillors.

Councillors are entitled to the expenses set out in this policy provided that they satisfy the stated requirements.

Reimbursement and reconciliation of expenses

Before Council will pay for an expense under this policy, Councillors must seek reimbursement in a formal written claim lodged not later than six (6) months after the expense was incurred.

Each claim must include original receipts, or tax invoices (where GST applies), to be considered for reimbursement.

Claims will generally be paid within 14 days of receipt.

Payment in advance

Council will not generally make advance payments to Councillors.

Spouse and partner expenses

Payment of expenses incurred by a Councillor's spouse or partner who may be accompanying the Councillor is dealt with in the respective sections of the policy.

SPECIFIC EXPENSES FOR MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

Civic Business within the LGA

a) Scope

Expenses will be paid for Councillors to attend:

- Meetings of the Council and Committees;
- Meetings of other committees, bodies, organisations or groups to which those Councillors are Council delegates or representatives;
- Other meetings or inspections which are authorised by the Council, the Mayor or the General Manager; and
- Training courses, seminars or conferences authorised by the Council (except in those circumstances where there is insufficient time for a Council decision and in those cases the Mayor has the authority to approve the attendance and report back at the next Council meeting for endorsement of that decision);

provided that the claim is made not later than six (6) months after the expenses were incurred.

Note: Any claims submitted later than six (6) months after the expenses were incurred will not be eligible for reimbursement.

b) Categories of Payment / Reimbursement

Council and Committee Meetings

(i) Travel

Councillors are entitled to be reimbursed for the use of their private vehicle for travel to and from meetings.

Payment will be based on the relevant kilometre rate in the staff award.

The allowable distance claimed will be for travel, by the most practicable route from the Councillor's usual place of residence or other place where the Councillor might be (whichever is the lesser), immediately prior to the meeting.

(ii) Meals

Arrangements will be made for a meal to be provided at the conclusion of the meeting at a venue, in proximity to where the meeting is held, of which Councillors and staff in attendance may partake.

(iii) Accommodation

In those circumstances where, in the opinion of the Mayor or General Manager, because of the timing of the meeting, it would be impractical or introduce undue risk for the Councillor to travel home after the meeting, Council will meet reasonable accommodation costs (including sustenance and telephone calls) on the evening of the meeting for the Councillor. Accommodation will generally be booked by Council staff.

(iv) Spouses/Partners

In those cases where the function is of such a nature that the Councillor's spouse/partner would normally be expected to accompany the Councillor, any costs associated with the attendance of the spouse/partner will be met by Council.

Meetings of other committees, bodies, organisations or groups to which those Councillors are Council delegates or representatives or other authorised meetings or inspections

(i) Travel

Where Council vehicles are unavailable, Councillors may use their private motor vehicle. Councillors should check with the Executive Secretary to ascertain whether a Council vehicle is available and should make arrangements to collect the vehicle (vehicles will not generally be delivered to Councillors).

Where a private motor vehicle is used, Councillors are entitled to be reimbursed for this use.

Payment will be based on the relevant kilometre rate in the staff award.

The allowable distance claimed will be for travel, by the most practicable route from the Councillor's usual place of residence or other place where the Councillor might be (whichever is the lesser), immediately prior to the meeting or inspection.

(ii) Out-of Pocket Expenses

Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed for costs associated with attendance, including entertainment, but excluding expenses of a normal personal nature.

(iii) Accommodation

In those circumstances where, in the opinion of the Mayor or General Manager, because of the timing of the meeting, it would be impractical or introduce undue risk for the Councillor to travel home after the meeting, Council will meet reasonable accommodation costs (including sustenance and telephone calls) on the evening of the meeting for the Councillor. Accommodation will generally be booked by Council staff.

(iv) Spouses/Partners

In those cases where the function is of such a nature that the Councillor's spouse/partner would normally be expected to accompany the Councillor, any costs associated with the attendance of the spouse/partner will be met by Council.

Training Courses, Seminars or Conferences

(i) Registration

Includes registration fees for attendance at conferences, seminars etc as well as associated official luncheons, dinners and tours.

(ii) Travel

Where Council vehicles are unavailable Councillors may use their private motor vehicle. Councillors should check with the Executive Secretary in the first instance to ascertain whether a Council vehicle is available and should make arrangements to collect the vehicle (vehicles will not generally be delivered to Councillors).

Where a private motor vehicle is used, Councillors are entitled to be reimbursed for this use.

Payment will be based on the relevant kilometre rate in the staff award.

The allowable distance claimed will be for travel, by the most practicable route from the Councillor's usual place of residence or other place where the Councillor might be (whichever is the lesser), immediately prior to the meeting or inspection.

(iii) Out-of-Pocket Expenses

Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed for costs associated with attendance, including entertainment, but excluding expenses of a normal private nature.

(iv) Accommodation

In those circumstances where, in the opinion of the Mayor or General Manager, because of the timing of the training course, seminar or conference, it would be impractical or introduce undue risk for the Councillor to travel home after the training course, seminar or conference, Council will meet reasonable accommodation costs (including sustenance and telephone calls) on the evening of the training course, seminar or conference, for the Councillor. Accommodation will generally be booked by Council staff.

(v) Spouses/Partners

In those cases where the function is of such a nature that the Councillor's spouse/partner would normally be expected to accompany the Councillor, any costs associated with the attendance of the spouse/partner will be met by Council.

Civic Business outside the LGA

a) Scope

Expenses will be paid for Councillors to attend:

- Conferences, seminars and training courses at which attendance has been authorised by the Council (except in those circumstances where there is insufficient time for a Council decision and in those cases the Mayor has the authority to approve the attendance and report back at the next Council meeting for endorsement of that decision);
- Meetings of other Councils while representing and as authorised by Council or the Mayor;
- Meetings of other committees, bodies, organisations or groups to which those Councillors are Council delegates or representatives; and
- Other meetings or inspections which are authorised by the Council, the Mayor or the General Manager.

provided that the claim is made not later than six (6) months after the expenses were incurred.

Note: Any claims submitted later than six (6) months after the expenses were incurred will not be eligible for reimbursement.

b) Categories of Payment/Reimbursement

(i) Registration

Includes registration fees for attendance at conferences, seminars etc as well as associated official luncheons, dinners and tours.

(ii) Travel

Council will either pay or reimburse Councillors for travel by air, private motor vehicle, rail or taxi/hire car, as appropriate and as set out below: (With all travel arrangements, due consideration is to be given to the physical capacity of the Councillor and any variation to the arrangements below will be with the approval of the Mayor).

(A) Air

Where travel is undertaken by air, this will be by economy class subject to any flight longer than three (3) hours being by business class. All bookings for travel will generally be made by Council staff.

(B) Private Motor Vehicle

Where Council vehicles are unavailable Councillors may use their private motor vehicle. Councillors should check with the Executive Secretary in the first instance to ascertain whether a Council vehicle is available and make arrangements to collect the vehicle (vehicles will not generally be delivered to Councillors).

Where a private motor vehicle is used, Councillors are entitled to be reimbursed for this use.

Payment will be based on the relevant kilometre rate in the staff award.

The allowable distance claimed will be for travel, by the most practicable route from the Councillor's usual place of residence or other place where the Councillor might be (whichever is the lesser), immediately prior to the meeting, function, training course, seminar or conference.

This claim will be subject to the cost not exceeding the economy class airfare as applicable.

Note: Sharing of travel arrangements for Councillors of any gender doing business outside the LGA be at the mutual agreement of the Councillors involved.

(C) Rail

Where travel is undertaken by train, Council will meet the cost of first class ticket, or equivalent, including sleeping berths where necessary.

(D) Taxi/Hire Car

Where travel is undertaken by taxi/hire car, Council will reimburse fares paid upon presentation of relevant receipts.

(iii) Accommodation

Council will meet reasonable costs (including sustenance and telephone charges) including the night before and after the meeting, training course, seminar or conference where necessary. Accommodation will generally be booked by Council staff.

Note: Sharing of accommodation for Councillors of any gender doing business outside the LGA be at the mutual agreement of the Councillors involved.

(iv) Out-of-Pocket Expenses

Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed for costs associated with attendance, including entertainment, but excluding expenses of a normal private nature.

(v) Spouses/Partners

Where a Councillor is accompanied by his/her spouse/partner, accommodation (shared basis) will be met by Council. All other costs will be the responsibility of the spouse/partner.

In exceptional circumstances Council may, by resolution, pay expenses incurred by the spouse/partner of the Councillor incurred whilst they are travelling on Council business.

Care and other related expenses

Councillors can claim up to \$100 per month for reimbursement of carer expenses that were incurred while attending Council business. This may include childcare expenses and the care of immediate family members of Councillors who are elderly, have a disability and/or are sick. Reimbursement of childcare expenses will be made for children under 16 years of age only. Expenses will be paid on production of receipts.

Communications expenses

Telephone

Subject to the wishes of individual Councillors:

- Council will install a dedicated duet/additional line at a location designated by the Councillor and will meet the installation costs of a combined Telephone/Facsimile/Answering Machine. Council will maintain the machine and will meet the cost of line rental and network charges as well as providing consumables for official purposes; or
- Alternatively, a Councillor may use his/or her own equipment (including mobile). In this instance Council will meet the line rental costs and network charges and will provide consumables for official purposes.

Internet

Subject to the wishes of individual Councillors:

- Council will provide Broadband internet access (with unlimited download limit) in accordance with Council's current internet plan; or
- Alternatively, a Councillor may use his/her own internet facilities and Council will reimburse an amount equivalent to Council's current internet plan.

Ongoing costs

Council will meet the cost of official calls and usage.

Provision for payment and monetary limits

Council will only pay claims for reimbursement of communications expenses upon production of original receipts or tax invoices and completion of Council's claim form which is to be lodged not later than six (6) months after the expense was incurred.

In respect of official calls and usage, subject to the provision of the relevant receipts or invoices, Council will reimburse Councillors up to a maximum of \$100 per month or \$200 per month in the case of the Mayor.

Councillors will be responsible for all expenses above this amount.

Exceptional circumstances

Should a situation arise where the strict application of this section of the policy would adversely affect and/or cause undue hardship to a Councillor, the Council may, by resolution, increase the maximum quantum available to that Councillor.

Administrative Expenses

It is recognised that Councillors may, from time to time, incur expenses of an administrative nature (such as the purchase of stationary, computer and printing supplies) in carrying out their civic duties. While it is expected that Councillors would obtain such items from Council (as provided in the section of this policy entitled "Provision of Facilities", it is acknowledged that there may be occasions where this is not practicable.

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Council will reimburse those administrative expenses incurred upon lodgement of an appropriate claim form accompanied by relevant receipts.

Any reimbursements (including supplies obtained from Council) will be limited to a maximum of \$600 per annum.

Insurance Expenses and obligations

Councillors will receive the benefit of insurance cover for:

- Personal injury while on Council business. The cover does not include medical expenses for illness in Australia.
- Professional indemnity for matters arising out of Councillors' performance of civic duties or exercise of their functions as Councillors provided the performance or exercise of the relevant civic duty is, in the opinion of Council, in good faith or proper. This is subject to any limitations or conditions set out in the policy of insurance that is taken out from time to time.
- Public liability for matters arising out of Councillors' performance of civic duties or exercise of their functions under the Local Government Act. This is subject to any limitations or conditions set out in the policy of insurance that is taken out from time to time.
- Councillors and Officers liability. This policy provides protection in respect of actions against the individual Councillors in addition to legal costs incurred by them in defending an allegation of a wrongful act made in the course of their duties as Councillors. This is subject to any limitations or conditions set out in the policy of insurance that is taken out from time to time.

Legal expenses and obligations

Council may by resolution indemnify or reimburse the reasonable legal expenses of:

- A Councillor defending an action arising from the performance in good faith of a function under the Local Government Act 1993; or
- A Councillor defending an action in defamation provided the statements complained of were made in good faith while exercising a function under the Local Government Act 1993; or
- A Councillor for proceedings before the Local Government Pecuniary Interest and Disciplinary Tribunal, or an investigative body, provided the subject of the proceedings arises from the performance in good faith or a function under the Local Government Act 1993 and the Tribunal or investigative body makes no adverse finding against the Councillor.

Council will not:

- Meet expenses incurred in relation to proceedings arising merely from something that a Councillor has done during his or her term of office; or
- Meet the costs of an action in defamation taken by a Councillor as plaintiff in any circumstances; or
- Meet the costs of a Councillor seeking advice in respect of possible defamation, or in seeking a non-litigious remedy for possible defamation.

PART 3: PROVISION OF FACILITIES

Councillors

The Councillors are to receive the benefit of the following Council facilities:-

- a) Meeting Meals and Refreshments - provision of meals and refreshments associated with Council, Committee and Working Parties/Special Committee meetings.
- b) Transportation - provision of Council motor vehicle transportation (when available) for travel to conferences, seminars, etc when on official Council business.

Where a Council vehicle is provided to a Councillor for use on official business, the vehicle may:

- With the consent of the Councillor, be driven by the Councillor's spouse or partner as long as that person is legally licensed to drive the Council vehicle; or
 - Provided the Councillor is in the vehicle at the time, be driven by any other fully licensed driver.
- c) Meeting Rooms - Provision of meeting facilities in the Mudgee Administration Building for the purpose of Council, Committee and Working Parties/Special Committee meetings, and for meeting with constituents.
 - d) Photocopiers - provision of photocopying facilities generally for official purposes.
 - e) Combined Telephone/Facsimile/Answering Machine – for official purposes.
 - f) At the discretion of the individual Councillor, Personal desktop or laptop computer with access to the internet and appropriate Council software to a maximum value of \$5,000 – for official purposes. Council will provide associated training and software support.
 - g) Where practicable, provision of a Councillors room, incorporating meeting facilities, computer workstation, telephone, etc.
 - h) Provision of an Email address for Councillors, as requested, to facilitate access to Council's electronic mail.
 - i) Business Cards for his/her role as an elected representative.
 - j) A suitable name badge.
 - k) Protective apparel, including (where appropriate), hard hat, safety vest, safety footwear and sunscreen for on-site inspections.
 - l) Provision of administrative supplies (such as stationary, and supplies for computers and printers).

Mayor

In addition to those facilities provided to the Councillors, the Mayor is to receive the benefit of:

- a) Council Vehicle - (Ford Fairlane Ghia or equivalent) for official purposes. The vehicle to be used at the discretion of the Mayor for Mayoral, Councillor or Council purposes. A fuel card will be provided for use only with the Mayoral vehicle.

When the Mayor or another Councillor is using the Mayoral vehicle on official business, the vehicle may:

- With the consent of the Mayor or Councillor, be driven by the spouse or partner of the Mayor or Councillor as long as that person is legally licensed to drive the Council vehicle; or
- Provided the Mayor or Councillor is in the vehicle at the time, be driven by any other fully licensed driver.

b) Mobile Telephone with a car kit - for official Council purposes.

Council will meet the costs of service charges and official usage costs, with the Mayor to reimburse Council in respect of any private expenses incurred.

c) Corporate Credit Card, to facilitate payment of official Council business expenses.

d) Official stationary incorporating Mayoral letterhead for official Council correspondence issued under the hand of the Mayor.

e) Business Cards for his/her role as Mayor.

f) Secretarial Services - word-processing and administrative support provided by the Executive Secretary.

g) Administrative Support - assistance with functions, organisations, meetings, and the like.

h) Office Refreshments - as provided in the Mayoral Office for entertainment purposes.

i) Where practicable, provision of an appropriate office, suitable for interviews and small civic receptions.

j) Use of ceremonial clothing including Mayoral Robes and chains of office.

k) A suitable name badge.

Deputy Mayor

In addition to those facilities provided to the Councillors, the Deputy Mayor is to receive the benefits of the Mayor when acting in the Office of Mayor.

COUNCILLORS WITH DISABILITIES

In addition to other clauses on this policy regarding the provision of facilities to Councillors, in the event of a Councillor having a disability that would prevent them from performing their civic duties without the provision of additional facilities, where necessary, and with the agreement of the Mayor and General Manager, additional appropriate facilities will be made available to that Councillor.

PART 4: OTHER MATTERS

ACQUISITION AND RETURNING OF FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT BY COUNCILLORS

All equipment issued to Councillors remains the property of Council and shall be returned on a Councillor ceasing to hold office.

However, on ceasing to be a Councillor or in the event of Council deciding to dispose of the equipment, a Councillor may request the purchase of such equipment. The General Manager shall consider each request and, where appropriate any leasing arrangements of such equipment. If the equipment is available to be sold, the General Manager will determine an “appropriate purchase price” based on fair market value and as suggested by the leasing company or the general market

CLAIMS FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

Expenses claim forms to facilitate claims for reimbursement of travel, meals, registration, accommodation and out-of-pocket expenses and the communications reimbursement claims will be provided to Councillors at each Council meeting.

Completed and signed claim forms will be processed by staff in accordance with this policy and will be submitted monthly to the General Manager for approval.