

ITEM 15

POLICY REVIEW: CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE BY REFERENCE GROUP AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The *Conference Attendance by Reference Group and Committee Members* Council policy has been reviewed as part of the Council's rolling review schedule of its policies.

RECOMMENDATION

Council adopt the revised *Conference Attendance by Reference Group and Committee Members* policy.

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Clare Phelan, Manager Governance and Information (Acting)

Authorised by: Kylee Cowgill, Director Corporate Services – Connected and Engaged City (Acting)

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Draft policy – *Conference Attendance by Reference Group and Committee Members*

BACKGROUND

The *Conference Attendance by Reference Group and Committee Members* policy, was last reviewed and adopted by Council in 2014. The purpose of the policy is to regulate attendance at appropriate conferences and outline the approval processes for community members to Council's reference groups and committees.

PROPOSAL

A full review of the policy has been undertaken and an additional point is recommended for inclusion:

- “13. On return from any conference provided for by this policy, where not accompanied by a member of staff or Councillor member of the committee, the committee member must present a written or verbal presentation to the committee on the outcomes of the conference at its next scheduled meeting”.

The aim of the additional point 13 is improved accountability by members when attending conferences as a representative of Council.

One further addition has been made to the policy, and to other Council policies that are subject to review and adoption by Council. This is in relation to minor administrative changes to Council policies being adopted by the Executive Management Committee (EMC). This addition make clear that a minor administrative change to a Council policy, adopted by EMC such as a change to legislative references, does not alter the requirement for that policy to be subject to review and adoption by Council.

- 1 Council is to have opportunity to review and adopt, at least once during its Term, each Council policy.
- 2 A resolution of Council is required to adopt any variations to this policy, with the exception of minor administrative changes, such as updates to legislative references, which may be endorsed by the Executive Management Committee (EMC). Endorsement of administrative changes made to this policy by EMC does not alter the requirement for it to be reviewed and adopted by each Term of Council.

This additional clause is to be added to all Council policies as they come before Council for adoption.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Wollongong 2022 goal “We are a connected and engaged community”. It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan	Delivery Program 2012-17	Annual Plan 2016-2017
Strategy	5 Year Action	Annual Deliverables
4.4.4 Policies and procedures are simplified to ensure transparency and efficiency	4.4.4.1 Ensure policies and procedures are regularly reviewed, updated and promoted	Conduct rolling review of Council's policy register

CONCLUSION

The Conference Attendance by Reference Group and Committee Members Council policy provides guidance and advice to reference group and committee members, and staff, on the approval process for attendance at relevant conferences.



CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE BY REFERENCE GROUP AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

COUNCIL POLICY

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: [TO BE COMPLETED BY CORP SUPPORT]

BACKGROUND

Community and external independent members of Council reference groups or committees (herein referred to as community members) are eligible to represent Council at conferences relating to their particular group or committee, and may be required to travel outside of the local government area for this purpose.

This policy outlines the procedures that are required to be observed by community members in order to ensure accountability for costs and travel expenses when representing Council.

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this policy is to outline the approval process for, and regulate the attendance by, community members of Council reference groups or committees at relevant conferences including payment of costs, reimbursement of expenses and other matters.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy aims to ensure Council's accountability to stakeholders for costs incurred by community members for travel and attendance at relevant conferences outside of the local government area.

POLICY REVIEW AND VARIATION

- 1 Council is to have opportunity to review and adopt, at least once during its Term, each Council policy.
- 2 A resolution of Council is required to adopt any variations to this policy, with the exception of minor administrative changes, such as updates to legislative references, which may be endorsed by the Executive Management Committee (EMC). Endorsement of administrative changes made to this policy by EMC does not alter the requirement for it to be reviewed and adopted by each Term of Council.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE BY REFERENCE GROUP AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

COUNCIL POLICY

STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES

- 1 All requests by community members of Council reference groups and committees to attend their respective conference must initially be endorsed by the committee or reference group and approved by the appropriate Divisional Manager prior to being reported to an open meeting of Council for determination.

The report to Council must include full details relating to the conference, the expected benefits, duration, itinerary, number of persons attending (including committee members, Councillors, and staff), estimated costs and the source of funding. Costs include, but may not be limited to:

- Registration fee
- Official conference dinner ticket
- Accommodation
- Travel related expenses
- Incidental expenses.

- 2 Attendance at conferences by community members will be limited to one member per conference.
- 3 All costs associated with their attendance are to be met by the relevant Council Division.
- 4 All bookings and arrangements are to be undertaken by the appropriate Personal Assistant or Division Secretary.
- 5 Accommodation is to be booked at the conference venue unless the General Manager determines otherwise.
- 6 Council will meet all reasonable incidental out-of-pocket expenses incurred by community members subject to substantiation by way of receipts.

Incidental expenses may include Council related telephone or facsimile calls, taxi fares, parking station fees and cost of meals not included in registration fees, but excludes tips, laundry and dry cleaning (associated with overnight travel). Accommodation and meal expenses will not exceed those determined for Councillors in the *Councillor Expenses and Facilities* policy.
- 7 Community members representing Council at conferences must comply with Council's *Code of Conduct for Council Delegates and Members of Committees*.
- 8 Individual community members on Council reference groups or committees are limited to one conference per Council term.
- 9 Community members may be accompanied by spouses or partners subject to all expenses incurred in relation to the spouse or partner's presence being met by the community member.
- 10 Community members attending conferences are to travel to and from the conference with Councillors and/or Council staff where possible. Community members travelling to a conference in their own private vehicle are not eligible for any reimbursement of travelling expenses.
- 11 Community members are covered by Council's Corporate Travel and Personal Accident Insurance cover whilst attending conferences as representatives of Council. Staff must advise Council's Risk and Insurance team whenever a community member is attending a conference as a representative of Council prior to departure. Information required includes:

- The name of the community member
- In what capacity the community member is attending the conference, including the name of the committee or reference group they are a member of, and whether they are an invited speaker
- Where they are travelling to and if it is more than 100km from Wollongong
- The proposed dates of travel, including departure and return dates
- Mode of travel, for example by car, air travel, train etc.

- 12 Any Community Member who is requested to speak at a Conference on behalf of Council must adhere to Council's *Media Protocol* particularly in relation to not being official spokespersons of Council. Any request of this type must be forwarded to Council's Public Relations and Communications Unit.

- 13 On return from any conference provided for by this policy, where not accompanied by a member of staff or Councillor member of the committee, the committee member must present a written or verbal presentation to the committee on the outcomes of the conference at its next scheduled meeting.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE BY REFERENCE GROUP AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

COUNCIL POLICY

SUMMARY SHEET	
Responsible Division	Governance and Information
Date adopted by Council	[To be inserted by Corporate Governance]
Date of previous adoptions	10/11/2014, 28/11/2005, 24/06/2002
Date of next review	November 2020
Legislative or other requirement for review	Policy – each term of Council
Responsible Manager	Manager Governance and Information
Authorised by	Manager Governance and Information