

Burke Shire Council

Entertainment and Hospitality Expenditure Policy



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Executive Manager Corporate and Community Services	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated version information - Updated document formatting

1. Purpose

To provide guidelines regarding expenditure on entertainment or hospitality for Burke Shire Council (Council). For the purpose of this policy, the following will be regarded as expenditure on entertainment or hospitality where the cost is borne by the Council:

- the provision of food or drink other than as a commercial transaction for full payment;
- the provision of a performance other than as a commercial transaction for full payment;
- entertaining members of the public in order to promote a local government project;
- providing food or beverages to a person who is visiting the local government in an official capacity;
- providing food or beverages for a conference, course, meeting, seminar, workshop or another forum that is held by the local government for its Councillors, local government employees or other persons;
- paying for a Councillor or local government employee to attend a function as part of the Councillor's or employee's official duties or obligations as a Councillor or local government employee.

Entertainment and hospitality expenditure may relate to the provision to:

- Councillors;
- Council employees; or
- Others.

2. Policy Provisions

- All entertainment and hospitality expenditure must be incurred in the public interest. This means that the Councillor or Council officer authorising the expenditure must demonstrate that the expenditure will benefit the public generally or facilitate Council business.
- The amount spent on entertaining and hospitality must be reasonable, having regard to the benefit to the Council or the public.
- The expenditure must be provided for in a budget and must be authorised in accordance with the Council's normal accounting procedures and with the specific additional requirements in this policy.
- Expenditure incurred by Council which is not reasonable and appropriate (private expenses) must be repaid to Council within 28 days of being paid by Council.
- Entertainment and hospitality expenses may only be charged to a corporate credit card if that expenditure adheres to the requirements of the Credit Card Usage Policy and if that expenditure adheres to the requirements of this policy.

2.1 Hospitality provided to Councillors and Council Employees

The Council may meet the cost of food and non-alcoholic drinks provided to employees and Councillors in the following circumstances:

- Light meal may be provided for employees who are required to work during a meal time and an alternative meal break is not available:

This includes committee and working group meetings, conferences, seminars and training sessions where the cost is met by the Council

- If the employee is required to attend a meeting or other function attended by non-employees and food and drink is provided for all attendees under this policy.
- If the employee is working at premises remote from the normal place of work so that normal arrangements for a particular meal are not available.
- Alcoholic drinks may not be provided for employees except where the employee attends a function at which alcoholic drinks are provided via Council authorisation.
 - Events of this type would include the annual Christmas staff party.
 - As employees at such a function represent the Council they must only consume a reasonable amount of alcohol.
- Training courses, meetings and other functions.
- Where a training course, meeting or other function is arranged and employees or visitors will be present during a normal meal period, the Council may, if it facilitates the purpose of the event, arrange for refreshments to be made available.

Such refreshments are to be reasonable in relation to the purpose and nature of the event and the expected attendees.

- Alcohol may only be provided at a function if it has been approved prior to the function by the Mayor (or Deputy Mayor where the Mayor is unavailable).

Alcohol must not be provided during meetings or training courses provided by the Council.

- If an employee attends a training course, meeting or other function not provided by the Council at Council cost, the Council may pay for meals (including alcoholic drinks) if they are included in an overall cost for the event or are provided at meals which are an integral part of the event.

Council may meet the cost of food and alcoholic drinks provided to the Mayor, Councillors and other Council representatives in the following circumstances:

- A light meal may be provided for Councillors who are required to work during a meal time and an alternative meal break is not available. This includes committee and working group meetings, conferences, seminars and training sessions where the cost is met by the council.
- The Mayor or a Councillor is required to attend a meeting or other function attended by non-council personnel and food and drink is provided for all attendees under this policy.
- Alcoholic drinks may be provided for Mayor, Councillors and other Council representatives when attending a function at which alcoholic drinks are provided.

Note: Only the Mayor may charge expenditure on alcohol to a Corporate Credit Card.

2.2 Reasonable and Appropriate

The following are examples of expenditure which is considered reasonable and appropriate:-

Overall considerations

- All entertainment and hospitality expenditure must be in the public interest. The expenditure must be in relation to local government business and the advancement of Council objectives.
- The expenditure on entertainment and hospitality must not be excessive and must be reasonable having regard to the benefit to Council or the public.

- Priority is to be given to utilising Council owned facilities for entertainment and hospitality, and the expenditure must be provided for in a Council budget.
- The Councillor must comply with Council's normal accounting procedures and practices and with the specified additional requirements in this policy and Council's *procurement policy*.
- Expenditure incurred by Council which is not reasonable and appropriate (private expenses) must be repaid to council within 28 days of being paid.
- Entertainment and hospitality expenses may only be charged to a corporate credit card in accordance with this policy and the provisions as set out in Council's *Credit Card Usage Policy*.

Civic functions

- Such as citizenship ceremonies that provide community recognition or a welcome by Council.
- The decision as to reasonable and appropriate costs will take into consideration the numbers of attendees, the timing of the function, the venue and the location within the Shire.

Employer reward and recognition presentations:

- Recognition of Council officers to reward outstanding achievement in the provision of services to the public.
- This may include official reward and recognition events, length of service presentations and officer farewells. Such expenditure is to be approved by Chief Executive Officer.

ANZAC Day wreaths:

- Recognition of the service of war veterans to the community.

Public events:

- This includes the BBQ provided by Council for Australia Day and also the breakfast and BBQ provided for ANZAC Day and Community Christmas Event.

Condolence wreaths or floral presentations:

- For the death of or serious injury to a Councillor or Council officer or their immediate family or member of the community.
- This is in recognition of service and a mark of respect to his/her family.

Annual Christmas celebration:

- In order to recognise and appreciate Council officers for their dedication and commitment to the provision of Council services to the public, a contribution for food and beverages will be provided for the annual Christmas function.

Meetings within ordinary hours:

- Entertainment and hospitality for meetings held within ordinary working hours should be kept to a minimum.
- Where a Councillor or Council officers are required to work through a meal break or outside normal hours due to the impracticality of holding the meeting at any other time, the relevant meal allowance is to be used as a guide.
- Such entertainment and hospitality should not be substituted for business meetings that would ordinarily be conducted in the workplace. Examples may include Ordinary meetings of Council, Council committee meetings, management team meetings and works employees tool box meetings.

- Where there are regular meetings that are similar in nature each time, there will be no need to justify the reasonableness and appropriateness of expenditure for each meeting.
- It will be sufficient if the first meeting passes the public defensibility test.

Associated persons expenditure:

- Only in exceptional circumstances, specifically approved by Council, Mayor or Chief Executive Officer and where the attendance of an Associate is of demonstrated benefit to the Council, are the entertainment and hospitality costs for such a person to be met by the Council.
- In these instances, the Associate will be considered an official representative of the Council and will be expected to comply with Council's Code of Conduct.

Other Hospitality Expenses:

- Other types of expenditure considered reasonable as official hospitality includes the provision of tea, coffee, sugar, milk, and morning or afternoon tea for official visitors and appropriate staff.

NOT Reasonable and Appropriate

Examples of expenditure which is generally considered not to be reasonable and appropriate and are therefore to be treated as private expenditure are:

- Tips or gratuities – tipping is not customary in Australia, however when travelling overseas and tipping is the custom, these will be considered official expenditure;
- Dinners/functions at the private residence of a Councillor or Council officer;
- Drinks only costs – including hot and cold beverages;
- Morning/afternoon tea outside Council premises, where only Councillors or Council officers are attending;
- Stocking of bar fridges;
- Floral presentations (except as previously specified);
- Mini bar expenses;
- Staff working on Council premises where food and beverages are on sale are not entitled to charge food and beverages to Council in the normal course of their duties.

3. Definitions

Expenditure	The act of using Council funds, cash or cash-equivalent for purchasing a good or service, or a charge against available funds in settlement of an obligation as evidenced by an invoice, receipt, voucher, or other such document.
Hospitality	The provision of food, drink and/or entertainment for guests or business partners.

4. Key Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
Mayor	To lead councillors in their understanding of this policy.
CEO	To lead staff (either directly or through delegated authority) in their understanding of, and compliance with, this policy.
Executive Managers	To communicate, implement and comply with this policy.
Managers and Supervisors	To implement this policy and related procedures.
All Council staff	To comply with this policy and consider its implications for related projects and programs.

5. Related Documents

Legislation/Regulations	Awards	BSC Policies	Procedures
<i>Local Government Regulation 2012 – Section 196</i>			