

Telecommunications (Elected Members) Policy

1. Objectives

To provide an annual allowance to Members to adequately cover fixed and usage related telecommunications fees. In addition to this Council will provide Members with an Internet connection, or reimburse the cost of a connection, for the purposes of distributing meeting and agendas to Members who agree to this mode of distribution.

2. Principles

To meet Member's telecommunication costs relevant to their Membership on Council.

3. Issues

The *Local Government Act 1995* provides for a telecommunications allowance as an alternative to reimbursement of costs. The annual allowance is less costly to administer than the cost reimbursement option and does not rely on claims being lodged. It should more adequately meet Members' costs relating to communication with the community, each other and administration. The provision of an Internet connection will facilitate the electronic distribution of agendas, minutes and other otherwise printed matter. It will also provide a research and general information-gathering tool. It is recognised that some Members will have adequate internet connections with established internet addresses and so may not wish to have an additional connection or change service providers/internet address. In these circumstances Council will reimburse costs at the Members option. In order to keep reimbursement costs similar to the cost of providing a connection reimbursements to a maximum of 25 percent above the cost Council pays for Member's connections.

4. Policy

4.1 Telecommunication Charges

- Members will be paid an annual telecommunications allowance of \$1,600 in respect of a listed telephone number and other telecommunication costs.
- The payment will be made in conjunction with the payment of other fees.

4.2 Equipment – Communication Purposes

Council will provide a suitable facsimile machine and a suitable portable computer for Members' use but will, over time, seek to make the computer a replacement for the facsimile machine with the view to no longer supplying these machines in the future.

Ownership of the equipment may be transferred to a Member upon resignation or retirement, under the following circumstances:

- If the equipment is two years old or less it shall remain Council property.
- If the equipment is between two and four years old it will be offered to the member for an amount equal to the written down value of the equipment in Council's asset Register at the time he/she ceases to become a Member.
- If the equipment is four years old or more, it shall be gifted to the member.

4.3 Internet Connection

Council will provide an internet connection (currently ADSL) for each Member.

Council will reimburse the cost of internet connections where Members opt to provide their own connection, up to the value of 25 percent above the cost Council pays for connections it provides.

Adopted	May 2002
Reviewed	28 June 2004
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Expected date of review	