

ITEM 6

APPROVAL FOR COUNCILLOR TRAVEL - CR CATH BLAKEY - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Councillor Cath Blakey has requested approval for travel to Melbourne to undertake a professional development opportunity in accordance with the *Councillors Expenses and Facilities Policy*.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the travel costs of Councillor Blakey to attend a Professional Development opportunity at the University of Melbourne in May 2023.

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Todd Hopwood, Manager Governance and Customer Service
Authorised by: Renee Campbell, Director Corporate Services - Connected + Engaged City

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report.

BACKGROUND

Councillor Cath Blakey has been successful in being awarded a fee-waivered position to undertake the *Shared Pathways to COP28 City Diplomacy Masterclass* at the University of Melbourne. The Masterclass is delivered in two portions, the first is an online program delivered from 27 March to 21 April 2023, followed by an in-person intensive workshop to be held in Melbourne from 15 to 19 May 2023.

The funding support provided to Cr Blakey by the University of Melbourne covers full course fees, materials and accommodation during the one-week intensive in-person workshop in Melbourne. Under the funding support, travel costs to Melbourne are not covered.

PROPOSAL

Cr Blakey has submitted a request to the General Manager for approval for the travel costs of this professional development opportunity to be funded by Council.

Clause 6.28 of the *Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy* (Expenses Policy) states the following must be considered in assessing a Councillor request for professional development

6.28. Approval for professional development activities is subject to a prior written request to the General Manager outlining the:

- *details of the proposed professional development*
- *relevance to Council priorities and business*
- *relevance to the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties.*

The proposed professional development opportunity is consistent with the requirements of the Expenses Policy as the Shared Pathways program is designed to strengthen the influence of city diplomacy in tackling climate change, which is a key Council priority. All Councillors play a part in the city's approach to climate change and the course summary indicates that the Masterclass will not only cover international relations, but also a learning experience on how other cities are approaching the key issue of climate change.

As Cr Blakey has received a scholarship which covers the cost of the course and accommodation, the only financial contribution required by Council to facilitate this professional development opportunity is the costs associated with return travel to Melbourne.

Clause 6.9. of the Expenses Policy states that Councillors seeking approval for any interstate travel must obtain the approval of a full Council meeting prior to travel.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Exact costs would not be known until the time of booking, however the maximum cost of the proposed travel is approximately \$350-\$400 for return travel to Melbourne.

CONCLUSION

The proposed professional development opportunity to be undertaken by Cr Blakey is consistent with the requirements of the Councillors Expenses and Facilities Policy, however approval for any interstate travel must obtain the approval of a full Council meeting prior to travel.