

Media Response

28 February 2025

**Please attribute the following response to Greater Dandenong City Council
Chief Executive Officer, Jacqui Weatherill:**

Under our travel policy, interstate or international travel by the Mayor is to be approved by the CEO. Interstate travel for all other councillors is to be approved by the Mayor.

This applies if councillors' travel is to be funded by Council and it must be approved in advance of any bookings being made and any travel being undertaken.

Council expenses and reimbursements are provided to support councillors with costs that are reasonably incurred and are reasonably necessary for the councillor to perform their role and duties. This is in line with section 40 of the Local Government Act 2020 and our policy.

However, it is also open to a mayor or councillor to seek endorsement as a resolution through a formal meeting, as Cr Formoso did recently. A new Councillor Expenses policy will be considered by council soon. In recent years, a number of councils have moved to requiring all councillor interstate and international travel to be approved in a formal council meeting.

Cr Milkovic sought approval for his travel expenses from the Mayor, consistent with the requirements of the current policy.

When evaluating the appropriateness of travel requests, we consider:

- Whether the intended destination is safe and is not considered a high-risk.
- Whether the absence of the employee or Councillor is convenient to Council/business unit.
- Whether it is appropriate for Council to be funding the travel
- Whether the travel adds value to Council.

ENDS

Media Enquiry

26 February 2025

From the Dandenong Journal

Was wondering if you could clarify the current protocol for councillor interstate trip expenses?

Cr Formoso recently sought a councillor vote in a public meeting to authorise her intended travel/accommodation expenses to Canberra. Yet Cr Milkovic took the same trip, without any public vote.

1. What is the procedure for councillors seeking council-funded travel/accommodation expenses for interstate/international travel? Who authorises it - the mayor, the CEO or the councillors?
2. What is the criteria for granting travel expenses - does the Cr have to demonstrate the trip's value to ratepayers?
3. In Cr Milkovic's case, who authorised his expenses? On what grounds were the travel expenses granted? (deadline Friday 10am).