

ATTACHMENT B

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**RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED -
DRAFT COUNCILLORS' EXPENSES AND
FACILITIES POLICY 2017**

Response to Submissions Received - Draft Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy 2017

Comment	Response
Believes policy to be fair and reasonable given Sydney's status as a global city and the work of the Lord Mayor and the City – 24 submissions.	Noted.
Does not believe business travel should be used when travelling within Australia – 4 submissions.	Business class travel for journeys to Western Australia and the Northern Territory (over two hours) is consistent with State Government policy and practice. No change is proposed.
Querying staff numbers and budget within OLM and suggests reducing – 2 submissions.	The budget for the Office of the Lord Mayor was adopted on 26 June 2017. No change is proposed.
Believes business class travel for longer journeys suitable given requirement to work on arrival.	Noted.
Questions need for paper Christmas cards when electronic options are available.	The Lord Mayor and Councillors have the option of both paper and electronic Christmas and festive cards. No change is proposed.
Suggest annual limit for Communications and Mobile Devices should be \$2,500, not \$5,000.	The annual limit covers the provision of mobile devices such as an iPhone and iPad, relevant accessories such as protective cases and keyboards, and monthly service fees; multi-function devices and a 4G mobile broadband device and monthly service fee. The limit includes the cost of the initial purchase and future replacements of any of these devices. The limit, which has not been increased since 2012, reflects the primacy of electronic methods of communication over paper-based communication. No change is proposed.

Comment	Response
Cancelling clauses 7 to 10 which relate to conferences and representation at non-council functions, with Councillors to claim back.	The Policy must state the expenses and facilities which will be provided to the Lord Mayor and Councillors. Removing the clauses would mean Councillors could not be reimbursed for expenditure related to attendance at conferences or non-council functions. No change is proposed.
Abolish entitlement to newspapers as they are available through City of Sydney libraries.	Councillors are entitled to subscriptions to two daily newspapers which enables them to remain abreast of matters related to their civic duties, at a time and place convenient to them. No change is proposed.
Abolish entitlement to publications published by the City of Sydney, or which are relevant to their civic duties.	This entitlement enables Councillors to remain abreast of issues relevant to their civic duties and to the City of Sydney specifically.
Abolish entitlement for spouse / partner / accompanying person	Councillors are required to attend a range of functions in the course of their civic duties and it is appropriate for their spouse, partner, or accompanying person to attend on occasion. It is appropriate for the City of Sydney to meet the cost of the ticket or meal for those functions. No change is proposed.
Reduce Local Travel entitlement from \$6,000 to \$1,500 as car sharing and company vehicles should be encouraged	Councillors are able to use car share and City of Sydney fleet vehicles and drivers, in accordance with the Policy. The annual limit was last increased in 2011 and is considered appropriate to enable Councillors to undertake their civic duties across the local government area. No change is proposed.

Comment	Response
<p>Suggests position of Ombudsman be established to oversee this policy and report to Council.</p>	<p>The City of Sydney operates under an extensive system of governance oversight including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Code of Conduct that regulates the conduct of Councillors and staff; • internal and external auditors who review the City's operations, including the implementation of and compliance with the Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy; • the Office of Local Government oversees the operation of councils and reviews complaints; • other external agencies such as the NSW Ombudsman who respond to complaints about the operation of councils. <p>The most recent review of the local government sector did not recommend the establishment of the position of Ombudsman within councils. The NSW Ombudsman has previously suggested such positions should be considered carefully before being introduced as questions related to independence and authority can arise. Given this, it is not felt an Ombudsman is required. No change is proposed.</p>
<p>Believes carer's expenses are generous.</p>	<p>An increase in the annual limit for carer's expenses is proposed as the limit has not changed since 2012/2013 despite increased costs. The circumstances where carer's expenses may be claimed has also increased. No change is proposed.</p>
<p>Suggests Uber be included in types of transport available</p>	<p>The relevant provisions of the draft Policy do not preclude the use of Uber. No change is proposed.</p>