

Governance and management

Good governance, integrity and accountability are central to the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The Act is based on 5 principles:

- community engagement
- strategic planning
- financial management
- public transparency
- service performance.

We embed these 5 principles throughout our decision making, corporate governance and democratic governance. We have established governance rules to help us do this.

We seek to apply good governance to:

- effectively engage our community in sound and responsible decision making
- achieve the best outcomes for the Moreland community, considering future generations
- ensure the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information
- ensure our ongoing financial viability
- increase our performance
- identify and drive out inefficiencies
- reassure residents that we are spending public money responsibly, accountably and wisely.

Council meetings

Decisions on issues affecting the community are made at council meetings. Community members can observe the decision-making process at these meetings. They can also ask questions.

We hold Ordinary Council Meetings to conduct the business of Council. Where required, we may also hold Special Meetings.

We also hold council meetings to dealing with planning applications. These are Planning and other Related Matters meetings. Ordinary Council and Planning and Related Matters meetings are scheduled each month.

We live stream our council meetings to enable people to watch the proceedings in real time. Meetings are also recorded and available to watch later. Live streaming council meetings offers greater access to information, decision making and debate. It also underpins the principles of accessibility, openness and transparency.

In April 2020, the *Local Government Act 1989* was amended to allow council meetings to be held via video conferencing. This was in response to restrictions in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Minister for Local Government issued Ministerial Guidelines to govern how those meetings would be conducted. These guidelines ensure the transparency of council decision making is upheld.

We conducted all council meetings from July 2020 to February 2021 by video conferencing and livestreaming. We held council meetings in March, April and May 2021 in person in a Covid-19 safe way. These meetings were also livestreamed. The June 2021 council meeting was held using video conferencing and livestreaming.

In 2020-21, the number of people watching council meetings online (live and the recordings) was 27,876. This is a decrease from 34,822 in 2019-20.

Councillor attendance at meetings

In 2020-21, we held:

- 10 ordinary council meetings
- 5 special council meetings
- 9 council meetings to consider planning and related matters.

Below we have outlined councillor attendance for the 2020-21 year. This information reflects the local government elections held on 24 October 2020.

For the period from 1 July 2020 to 24 October 2020:

Councillor	Ordinary council meetings (total 4)	Special council meetings (total 2)	Planning and related matters (total 3)
Cr Natalie Abboud	4	2	3
Cr Sue Bolton	4	2	3
Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan	4	2	3
Cr Helen Davidson	4	2	3
Cr Jess Dorney	4	1	2
Cr Ali Irfanli	4	2	3
Cr John Kavanagh	4	2	3
Cr Dale Martin	4	2	3
Cr Mark Riley	4	2	3
Cr Lambros Tapinos	4	2	3
Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	4	2	3

For the period from 17 November 2020 to 30 June 2021:

Councillor	Ordinary council meetings (total 6)	Special council meetings (total 3)	Planning and related matters (total 6)
Cr Sue Bolton	6	3	6
Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan	6	3	5
Cr James Conlan	6	3	6
Cr Helen Davidson	6	3	5
Cr Milad El-Halabi JP	5	3	4
Cr Angelica Panopoulos	6	3	6
Cr Helen Pavlidis-Mihalakos	6	3	5
Cr Adam Pulford	6	3	6
Cr Mark Riley	6	3	5
Cr Lambros Tapinos	6	3	6
Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	6	3	6

Major committees

Audit and Risk Committee

Our Audit and Risk Management Committee was established under the *Local Government Act 2020* (the 'Act'). The committee charter was adopted on 13 May 2020 with the first meeting held on 23 June 2020.

Pursuant to section 53(2) of the Act, the committee is an advisory committee of Moreland Council. The Audit and Risk Committee was established to strengthen our governance, risk management and financial management and to drive continuous improvement.

The committee helps us discharge our responsibilities under the Act to:

- monitor the compliance of council policies and procedures with:
 - the overarching governance principles
 - the Act and the regulations and any ministerial directions
 - other relevant laws and regulations
- monitor internal controls
- monitor council financial and performance reporting
- monitor and provide advice on risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls
- oversee internal audit functions
- oversee external audit functions
- monitor related party transactions.

The current committee has 7 members. These are:

- an independent chair, John Watson
- 3 independent members, Craig Burke, Joelle Tabone and Lisa Tripodi
- 3 councillors. Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan (Mayor), Cr Mark Riley (Deputy Mayor) and Cr Lambros Tapinos were appointed to the committee on 20 November 2020.

Four meetings were held during 2020-21. The following councillors attended these meetings:

- 22 September 2020 – Cr Mark Riley and Cr Oscar Yildiz (for the period 2019-20)
- 15 December 2020 – Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan, Cr Mark Riley and Cr Lambros Tapinos
- 16 March 2021 – Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan, Cr Mark Riley and Cr Lambros Tapinos
- 15 June 2021 – Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan and Cr Mark Riley.

Special committees

There were no special committees established by Moreland Council operating in 2020-21.

Councillor expenses and allowances

Expenses

We provide councillors with resources and support to undertake their duties. This is so they can serve, engage and act in the community's best interests. We may make available or pay for resources or reimburse claims for out-of-pocket expenses.

Our Councillor Support Expenses and Resources Policy provides the level of expense and resources support provided.

We publish details of councillor expenses (including those reimbursed) on our website quarterly.

Councillor expenses for the 2020-21 year are outlined below.

	Travel/ mileage	Child/ family care	Conference/ training	Mobile and data	Events	Copying/ stationery	Total
Cr Natalie Abboud**	-	-	-	\$294.20	-	-	\$294.20
Cr Sue Bolton	-	-	-	\$612.21	-	\$86.97	\$699.18
Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan	-	\$3,500.88	-	\$627.40	\$86.90	\$247.96	\$4,463.14
Cr James Conlan	-	-	-	\$316.84	-	\$86.97	\$403.81

	Travel/ mileage	Child/ family care	Conference/ training	Mobile and data	Events	Copying/ stationery	Total
Cr Helen Davidson	\$540.64	-	\$1,314.00	\$612.89	\$86.90	\$86.97	\$2,641.40
Cr Milad El-Halabi JP	-	-		\$132.94	-	\$86.97	\$219.91
Cr Jess Dorney**	-	-	-	\$294.20	-	-	\$294.20
Cr Ali Irfanli**	-	-	-	\$294.20	-	-	\$294.20
Cr John Kavanagh**	-	-	-	\$294.20	-	-	\$294.20
Cr Dale Martin**	-	-	-	\$294.20	-	-	\$294.20
Cr Angelica Panopoulos	\$721.18	-	\$2,159.00	\$301.84	\$86.90	\$86.97	\$3,355.89
Cr Helen Pavlidis-Mihalakos	\$607.57	-	\$1,314.00	\$301.84	\$86.90	\$546.23	\$2,856.54
Cr Adam Pulford	\$558.50	-	\$1,314.00	\$301.84	\$86.90	\$86.97	\$2,348.21
Cr Mark Riley	-	-	-	\$622.70	\$86.90	\$86.97	\$796.57
Cr Lambros Tapinos	\$1,430.25	-	\$1,314.00	\$579.24	-	\$210.97	\$3,534.46
Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	\$540.64	-	\$1,314.00	\$579.92	-	\$86.97	\$2,521.53

** Term as councillor concluded in October 2020

Allowances

Our mayor and councillors are entitled to receive an allowance while performing their duties as elected officials.

Council must review allowances under the *Local Government Act 1989*. This is until the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal makes its first determination.

Council reviewed the mayor and councillor allowances before 30 June following the council election. This was required by the *Local Government Act 1989*.

In October 2020, the Minister determined a 0% adjustment to allowances for all councils. In reviewing its allowances, Council retained the allowances at the top of the range for a category 3 council. This was because of the complexity of the issues to be determined by Council and the significant expectations on councillors.

The allowances paid to our mayor and councillors are:

	Allowance	Superannuation guarantee (9.5%)	Total
Mayor	\$100,434	\$9,541	\$109,473.06
Councillors	\$31,444	\$2,987	\$34,431.18

Councillor Code of Conduct

Our Councillor Code of Conduct was reviewed and adopted on 23 February 2021. It is available on the Moreland Council website.

The code sets out the standards of conduct expected of councillors. The code aims to empower councillors to model fair and respectful behaviours. This is so they can work together constructively in the best interests of the local community.

Conflict of interest

Councillors are elected by residents and ratepayers to act in the best interests of the community. This is a position of trust that requires councillors to act in the public interest.

Council officers must also act and prioritise public interests when undertaking their duties and functions.

There are 2 types of conflict of interest:

- A conflict between a councillor's or employee's public duty to act in the best interests of the community or organisation and their private interests. This is a general conflict of interest.
- Where a councillor or employee would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter. This is a material conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interest may be real, perceived or potential. They may also arise from direct or indirect interests.

A conflict of interest must be declared and appropriately managed. This is to ensure that public interests are not compromised or undermined in any way. A conflict of interest can exist and must be declared even if no improper act results from it. It is also not important how the conflict of interest has arisen.

We are committed to delivering services to our community fairly and transparently, without favour or bias. Our integrity is critical to our reputation and effectiveness in the local community.

We have a procedure in place to accommodate the disclosure of a conflict of interest. The opportunity to declare a conflict of interest is a standard agenda item for all council meetings. This declaration also takes place before the start of procurement and recruitment processes.

In general, managing conflicts of interest involve:

- disclosing the conflict in a specific way
- considering the duties of the declarant
- determining the risk associated with the conflict arising
- applying an appropriate treatment.

This may require:

- the declarant to be removed from any decision making on a particular matter
- restricting the declarant's involvement in the matter
- recruiting a disinterested or independent third party
- the declarant relinquishing the private interest.

We maintain a register of all declarations that raise a conflict of interest from councillors and staff.

During 2020-21, 26 conflict of interest disclosures were made at council meetings. In declaring a conflict of interest, the relevant councillor would leave the meeting. This removed them from the decision-making process in relation to that matter. In 1 instance, a declaration was made on behalf of a councillor who was not in attendance.

There were 4 conflict of interest declarations added to the register for council officers.

We reviewed our Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy for Councillors in April 2021. This policy sets out practices to avoid the potential for conflicts of interest through the offer/acceptance of:

- gifts
- benefits
- hospitality.

Our procedures vary depending on the role and circumstances of the offer. Our policy has robust thresholds and defined practices.