NEWCASTLE ORIENTEERING CLUB – VOLUNTEER REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

Purpose

To provide guidance for Club members about how reimbursement of Club-related expenses will be administered.

Rationale

It is recognised that volunteers give freely of their time and should not be excessively disadvantaged financially within their role.

Claiming under this policy is always optional. Members who prefer to continue donating their expenses to the Club simply do not claim.

Definitions

Expense: money spent by a volunteer in the course of carrying out their volunteer duties for the Club. This could include excessive travel costs, materials, equipment and other out-of-pocket costs.

Reimbursement: the action of repaying a person who has incurred out-of-pocket expenses on behalf of the Club. Reimbursement could include repayment of all or part of the expense.

Conditions

Prior approval: will be required from the Club's Executive for large material expenditure. Large material expenditure means any single item or purchase exceeding $300 – for example SI units/sticks, control stands, map printers, or Club uniforms.

No pre-approval is required: for recurrent expenditure such as van fuel and other van expenses, prizes & trophies, SI unit batteries, Pretex map paper, printer toner etc. Ad-hoc expenditure for events (toilet hire, toilet paper, plastic cups etc) would not require pre-approval, nor would the purchase of consumables (thermal rolls, insect repellent etc).

Receipts, invoice or records required: The person claiming reimbursement will be required to produce a receipt for the expenditure, or provide an invoice if the supplier is to be paid directly, or provide the required travel record if claiming excess travel.

Travel Expense Claims and Reimbursement

A volunteer may wish to claim reimbursement for excessive travel by private vehicle and/or accommodation costs. This could include costs involved in activities such as:

- event location reconnaissance
- course setting
- controlling/vetting

- essential preparation and set-up on days prior to the date of the event

Note: Mapping and map-maintenance projects are outside the scope of this policy and are covered by the NOC Mapping Policy.

Travel: Volunteers will be reimbursed by way of an all-inclusive mileage allowance for excessive kilometres travelled.

Excessive travel is defined as the total of kilometres travelled in excess of 100 km for each return trip from the volunteer’s place of residence to the event/map area. (For example: if home to map and return = 120 km and a total of three trips were taken, then excess travel is 3 × 20 km = 60 km.)

Volunteers will be reimbursed by way of an all-inclusive mileage allowance at a flat rate of $0.40 per km of excessive travel ($0.60 per kilometre when towing a trailer). This rate is deliberately set below the ATO cents-per-kilometre deduction rate ($0.91/km for 2026-27) so that it is a partial reimbursement of costs actually incurred, and it is reviewed annually by the Committee.

A travel record using the attached form must accompany each claim.

Trip caps: The number of reimbursable return trips per event is capped by role: course setter – up to 4 trips; vetter/controller – up to 4 trips; event organiser – up to 2 trips. Additional trips may be reimbursed only where the Committee has approved them in advance.

Event support budget: When the Club agrees to stage an event that is likely to incur substantial excess travel and accommodation costs, the Committee will approve an estimated volunteer support budget for that event (expected trips × distance × rate, plus any accommodation) at the time the event is adopted, so that the full cost of taking on the event is visible before the Club commits.

Accommodation: Where the venue of an event is more than 2 hours’ drive from the volunteer’s home, volunteers may be reimbursed the reasonable cost of accommodation, up to $150 per room per night unless a higher amount is approved in advance by the Committee. Volunteers are expected to share accommodation where practical. A receipt is required, and accommodation should be anticipated in the event’s volunteer support budget.

Recognition of Volunteers at Local Events

Ordinary travel to events is part of the volunteer contribution and is recognised in kind rather than in cash. The Club’s existing practice of awarding free entry vouchers to event volunteers, presented at end-of-series presentations, continues under this policy and may be further developed under the NCN Volunteer Framework (for example, as a pointsand-milestones scheme). Free entries are a gratuitous recognition of contribution, not payment for services.

Out of Scope

This policy does not cover: mapping and map-maintenance projects (see the NOC Mapping Policy), or travel costs to compete at events.

Procedure

Volunteers incurring authorised expenditure must submit original receipts for reimbursement to the Club treasurer. Receipts should be submitted as soon as possible after purchase and within 28 days. Paper receipts can be handed to the treasurer, or receipts can be scanned and emailed to the treasurer at: treasurer@newcastleorienteeringclub.asn.au

Supplier invoices must be submitted to the Club treasurer as soon as possible after purchase and within 28 days. Paper invoices can be handed to the treasurer, or invoices can be scanned and emailed to the treasurer at: treasurer@newcastleorienteeringclub.asn.au

Claimants will provide their BSB, account number and account name to the Club treasurer. The treasurer will process the reimbursement or supplier payment using electronic funds transfer (EFT).

Taxation Implications

A reimbursement made to a volunteer is classified by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) as non-assessable income given that the payment is made to meet incurred expenses. Because the Club’s mileage allowance is set below the ATO deduction rate, payments under this policy cannot exceed the costs a volunteer actually incurs, which puts their status as reimbursements (rather than assessable income) beyond doubt.

Review and Related Documents

The Committee will review the mileage rates, the definition of excessive travel, the accommodation cap and the pre-approval threshold annually, as part of the budget process.

Related documents: ONSW Manual 2.7 (Expense Claims) and 2.8 (Transport Reimbursement); ATO guidance on paying volunteers; NOC Mapping Policy; NOC Financial Support Policy; NCN Volunteer Framework; NOC Vehicle Reimbursement Form.

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