

# Lord Mayor Robert Doyle's \$28k expenditure on council credit card

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Peter Mickelborough, Sunday HeraldSun



Lord Mayor Robert Doyle. Picture: HAMISH BLAIR

LORD Mayor Robert Doyle is under fire after ringing up \$28,000 of personal expenses on his council credit card.

A *Sunday Herald Sun* investigation has revealed private purchases made at restaurants, and on airfares, clothing and beauty products and for car servicing in the three and a half years to June 30 last year.

Thousands of dollars was spent at one restaurant, Lupino's in Little Collins Street.

Cr Doyle said he had repaid all the expenses and said it was either due to a mix-up with his personal card or when he realised the expense would not benefit the city council.

“I’d rather go that way, that’s the way I sort of roll,” he said. “I take great pride in never being able to be accused of using council money for private purposes.”



*Lupino restaurant, Melbourne .*



*Canali menswear, London.*

The Lord Mayor said some spending — including birth notices in the *Herald Sun* to announce the arrival of son Henry, with wife Emma Page — had been made in error, because his council credit card looked similar to his personal card and he used the same pin.

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Other expenses had been repaid immediately as they had been of no real benefit to ratepayers, he said.

An examination of receipts for his council-supplied card shows 80 restaurant visits, including 25 at favourite Lupino where he spent \$2,131 in personal expenses he later repaid.

But Cr Foster said: “If you can’t manage a ratepayer-funded credit card, how can you manage a \$250 million Queen Victoria Market redevelopment or a \$400 million annual budget? Very clearly there is a very serious lack of accountability in the Lord Mayor’s office.

“If this is the standard that the Lord Mayor wants to set for other councillors or staff, it would be a hazardously deficient standard.”

The use of corporate credit cards for personal use is banned by most Victorian councils and all government departments, but the City of Melbourne does not have a policy on the use of credit by the lord mayor.

Cr Doyle’s personal spending includes 70 purchases ranging from \$13 to \$2880.

Asked why he did not use his own card in these circumstances, Cr Doyle said it was often something he considered after he returned to the office, “and I think to myself, ‘Well, was there any benefit to that?’ ”

Cr Doyle said he hoped ratepayers would see he had not tried to pocket any council money