

Council Policy – Elected Member Continuing Professional Development

Responsible Directorate	Corporate Services
Responsible Business Unit/s	Governance
Responsible Officer	Manager Governance
Affected Business Unit/s	Governance Office of the Chief Executive Officer

Objective

To ensure that elected members are provided opportunities to participate in continuing professional development as part of their obligation and duty to fulfil their role on Council.

Scope

This policy applies to all elected members of the Shire of Ashburton (the Shire).

Policy Statement

1. Introduction

Elected members have a unique and challenging role performing their functions under the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act). The Shire recognises the value of training and continuing professional development to supplement and build elected members skills and experience.

2. Compulsory Training

Section 5.126 of the Act requires elected members to complete training as prescribed in the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* (the Regulations). The prescribed training is the course titled Council Member Essentials. (Certain exemptions, specified in the Regulations, apply).

The Council Member Essentials training must be completed within 12 months of being elected and is valid for five years. Non-compliance with the requirement to complete training is an offence under the Act, punishable by a fine not exceeding \$10,000.



Following each ordinary election, elected members will be provided with information on training options from the approved training providers as stated in the Regulations. Elected members will be able to select a training option to meet their learning style and availability.

Compulsory training will be deducted from the individual elected member's annual Conference/Training budget allocation, as detailed in clause 3.2 of this policy

3. Continuing professional development

Subject to sufficient funds being available in the Conference/Training budget, elected members are encouraged to attend professional development events each financial year.

Professional development can take several forms including, but not limited to, formal qualifications, short courses, seminars and conferences.

Professional development must relate to the role of an elected member and provide a benefit to Council, Shire and/or community. Examples of professional development relevant to an elected member's role are:

- Local government leadership;
- Town planning;
- Strategic planning;
- Financial management;
- Corporate governance;
- Risk management;
- Conflict resolution;
- Emergency management; and
- Public sector management.

Where possible, professional development should be conducted through a Registered Training Organisation. Organisations that provide training relating to the professional development of elected members include, but are not limited to:

- Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA);
- Australian Local Government Association (ALGA);
- Australian Institute of Management;
- Australian Institute of Company Directors; and
- Institute of Public Administration Australia.

3.1 Professional development approval

All requests for professional development shall be submitted to the 'Councillor Support' email address on an Elected Member Application for Training/Conference Attendance form. The CEO is authorised to approve requests where it is considered to meet this policy and is within the individual elected member's annual Conference/Training budget allocation, as detailed in clause 3.2 of this policy.

Where:

- An elected member is seeking to attend an event outside of Australia, the request is required to be submitted to Council for its consideration.
- An elected member's request for professional development is declined by the CEO under this policy, the elected member may request the matter be referred to Council for determination.
- The CEO considers special circumstances apply in relation to an elected member's professional development request, the CEO may refer the request to Council for its consideration.

3.1.1 Limitations

In accordance with regulation 37(3) of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*, the Shire must not pay for or reimburse elected members any amount in relation to continuing professional development which occurs during the following periods:

- The last 3 months of their term
- Where they have provided a notice of resignation – from the day the notice was delivered
- During a period of suspension of the Council or council member.

3.2 Conference/Training Budget

Each elected member will be allocated \$5,000 in the annual Conference/Training budget for professional development.

In addition to the individual elected member allocations, an annual budget will be set for the following:

- Attendance for all elected members at the annual WALGA WA Local Government Week Convention.
- The Shire President and Deputy President's attendance at either the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly or the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) State of the Nation forum.

3.3 Registration and travel

All professional development and associated travel (where applicable) shall be coordinated by the Shire.

Please refer to Council Policy – Elected Member Entitlements for further information.

3.4 Knowledge sharing

Within one month of returning from any professional development attended (excluding the annual WALGA WA Local Government Week Convention), elected members shall complete an Elected Member Training Evaluation Form and provide this to Councillor Support email address for inclusion in the CEO's Friday Facts and/or to be shared on the Councillors MS Teams channel.

Comments/learnings should be included in the form to enable knowledge sharing with all elected members.

3.5 Non attendance at approved Professional Development

Where the CEO approves elected member continuing professional development as provided in clause 3, and the elected member fails to attend, or complete the training/course (unless exceptional circumstances apply to the satisfaction of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)) the elected member shall reimburse the Shire the training and any other directly related costs.

Where an elected member is dissatisfied with a request by the CEO to refund professional development expenditure, Council shall determine the matter.

4. Reporting

Section 5.127 of the Act requires that each financial year, a report must be prepared for the training completed by elected members in that financial year. The Chief Executive Officer must publish this report on the Shire's website by the end of July of every year.

Definitions

Approved Training Providers means the providers listed under regulation 35(2)(b) of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*, which are North & South Metropolitan TAFE and WALGA.

Council Members Essentials means the mandatory course for Council Members consisting of the following modules:

- Understanding local government;
- Serving on Council;
- Meeting procedures;
- Conflicts of interest; and
- Understanding of financial reports and budgets.



Relevant policies/documents

[Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates](#)

[Elected Member - Training Conference Attendance Application](#)

[Elected Member - Training Evaluation Form](#)

[Elected Member - Expense Claim Form](#)

[Elected Member - Travel Expense Claim Form](#)

Shire of Ashburton Recordkeeping Plan

Relevant legislation/local laws

Local Government Act 1995

Section 5.98(2)(b) Fees etc. for council members

Section 5.126 Training for council members

Section 5.127 Report on training

Section 5.128 Policy for continuing professional development

Section 5.129 Fees and expenses

Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996

Regulation 32(1) Expenses that may be approved for reimbursement

Regulation 35 Training for council members

Regulation 37 Fees and expenses

Salaries and Allowances Tribunal determination – Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members

Office use only

Relevant delegations	Nil			
Adoption method	Absolute Majority			
Council adoption	Date	12 July 2022	Resolution #	094/2022
Reviewed/modified	Date	12 December 2023	Resolution #	231/2023
	Date	9 December 2025	Resolution #	243/2025
	Date		Resolution #	
	Date		Resolution #	
Next review due	2027			
