

<b>POLICY NO.</b>	M.3
<b>POLICY SUBJECT</b>	Councillor Training/Conferences and Continuing Professional Development
<b>ADOPTION DATE</b>	30 April 2020
<b>LAST REVIEW DATE</b>	25 November 2021 (C.05/1121)

### **Objective**

This policy describes Council's approach to enable councillors to meet their statutory obligations in relation to councillor training and gives effect to the requirement to adopt a continuing professional development policy.

Part 5, Division 10 of the Local Government Act 1995 (the Act) describes provisions related to the universal training of Councillors:

- Under section 5.126 of the Act, each councillor must complete training in accordance with the Regulations;
- Under section 5.127 of the Act, the CEO must publish a report on the local government's website within 1 month of the end of the financial year detailing the training completed by Councillors; and
- Under section 5.128 of the Act, a local government must prepare and adopt a policy in relation to the continuing professional development of councillors.

### **Policy**

#### 1. Introduction

Councillors have a unique and challenging role performing their functions under the Act. Council recognises the value of training and continuing professional development to build and supplement councillor skills and experience.

Training can take several forms including formal qualifications, short-courses, seminars and conferences.

Training paid for in accordance with this policy must have benefit to Council, the Shire and the community. Training must relate to the professional development of councillors in their role as a councillor. Examples of organisations that provide training relating to the professional development of councillors, includes, but is not restricted to:

- Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA)
- Australian Local Government Association
- Australian Institute of Management
- Australian Institute of Company Directors

Training related to town planning; strategic planning; financial management; corporate governance; risk management; and emergency management is also considered to be relevant.

Attendance and/or participation at conferences is also considered to be training where value to the Council, Shire and community can be demonstrated.

## 2. Councillor Compulsory Training

The Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 (the Regulations) requires councillors to complete a 'Council Member Essentials' course consisting of five modules. Certain exemptions, specified in the Regulations, apply.

Training must be completed by all councillors following their election within 12 months of taking office. Non-compliance with the requirement to complete training is an offence under the Act punishable by a fine not exceeding \$5,000.

Once completed the compulsory training modules are valid for five years.

Councillors have a responsibility to complete training in accordance with legislation.

The CEO will ensure that newly elected councillors will be provided with information on training options from the approved training providers. Councillors will be able to select a training option to meet their learning style and availability.

Council will allocate funds in its annual budget for the completion of compulsory training. This allocation will be separate to the individual councillor professional development funds budgeted annually (refer below).

## 3. Continuing Professional Development

The Shire is committed to supporting continuing professional development of councillors to the benefit of Council, the Shire and the community. Continuing professional development can include training and attendance at conferences in accordance with this policy. Training that exceeds the allocated budget amount may be approved by resolution of Council.

Each councillor is to be allotted an annual professional development allocation in the annual budget and this will fund individual councillor training (other than the compulsory councillor training modules) or conference attendance each year. The allocation is for a financial year and expires at the end of the financial year.

The amount of the annual allocation is \$2,000 for the Shire President, \$1,500 for the Deputy Shire President and \$1,000 for other councillors. Note this allocation doesn't include attendance at the annual Local Government Convention (WALGA) which due to cost is dealt with in Part 4 below.

## 4. Local Government Convention (WALGA)

Council will include funds in its annual budget of attendance at the Local Government Convention for a maximum of three delegates to represent the Shire.

The costs of attending this conference are separate from the annual allocations provided to councillors in Part 3 above.

Council's South West WALGA Zone delegate is to have automatic rights to attend the Local Government Convention (WALGA) each year if he/she desires. The selection of other councillors will be via nomination and in the event of more nominations than vacancies being received preference will be given to councillors who did not attend the previous year.

## 5. Reporting

Councillors should note that all training undertaken, including conferences paid for entirely or partially by the Shire will be published on the Shire's website in accordance with section 5.127 of the Act.

## 6. Seeking Approval for Training or Professional Development

- 6.1 Councillors seeking to attend a training course or conference are to submit a request to the CEO. The CEO will refer the request to the Shire President for approval. Note for enrolment in a compulsory training module the approval of the Shire President isn't required. Council approves councillor attendance at the annual Local Government Convention
- 6.2 Where a councillor has insufficient funds remaining in their annual professional development allocation they can seek Council approval for over-expenditure and enrolment in a specific course or initiative.

## 7. Expenditure Limitations

- 7.1 Council will not be responsible for expenses associated with laundry, dry-cleaning or purchase of in-house movies.
- 7.2 Travel should be by Council vehicle unless written authorisation is received from the CEO for use of a private vehicle with reimbursement of a vehicle kilometre rate being paid and costed against the councillor's annual professional development allocation.
- 7.3 That where a Councillor is an official participant or observer, accommodation expenses will be paid. In addition, meal expenses not exceeding \$100 per day will be paid. If meals are purchased outside of the accommodation outlet, receipts will be required.
- 7.4 Accommodation allowance - any councillor attending an approved conference or training program requiring overnight accommodation that elects to stay with relatives or friends (i.e. as an alternative to staying in motel/hotel accommodation), be paid an amount as set out for the same or similar circumstances under the Public Service Award 1992 issued by the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission. This payment is to be costed to the councillor's annual allocation.

*It is noted that the expenditure limitations and accommodation allowance set out in Part 7 also apply to staff attending training, conferences or other professional development.*