

# GC5 – Council Member Continuing Professional Development

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## 1 Objectives

To give effect to the Shire's commitment to facilitate continuing professional development of Council Members, which enhances their knowledge and develops their skills, thus augmenting Council's capacity for well-informed decision-making and the provision of good government for our community. This policy provides a framework to assist Council Members to identify and access relevant training and defines the expenses that will be paid by the Shire.

This policy supports compliance with sections 5.127 and 5.128 of the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act), which require Local Governments to prepare and adopt a policy in relation to the continuing professional development of Council Members, and to provide annual reports on training.

## 2 Scope

This policy applies to Council Member training and continuing professional development, including mandatory training required under s.5.126 of the Act.

## 3 Definitions

### 3.1 Mandatory Training

Means the course of training specified in r.35(2) of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*, which consists of the following modules —

- (a) Understanding Local Government;
- (b) Serving on Council;
- (c) Meeting Procedures;
- (d) Conflicts of Interest;
- (e) Understanding Financial Reports and Budgets;

And is provided by any of the following bodies —

- (a) North Metropolitan TAFE;
- (b) South Metropolitan TAFE;
- (c) WALGA.

## 4 Policy

### 4.1 Budget Allocations

The Shire Annual Budget will include:

(a) Whole of Council Training and Development

An allocation for Council as a whole, to be used for:

- Council Member Induction;
- Mandatory Council Member Training;
- Local Government Convention (WALGA);
- Biennial Council Member Study Tour; and

- Fact Finding Tours.

(b) Council Member Professional Development

An allocation for each Council Member to be used for individual Continuing Professional Development. Council Members may select training and professional development to be funded from this allocation, subject to approval in accordance with this Policy.

Unexpended allocations at the end of a financial year will not be carried forward to the next financial year.

Any professional development proposal that exceeds an individual Council Member's allocation will be referred for Council decision. Alternatively, the Council Member may choose to privately fund any shortfall. This will not be eligible for reimbursement from a future budget allocation.

#### 4.2 Council Member Induction

Following each election, the Shire will conduct a comprehensive induction program, providing newly elected Council Members with information that will support them to understand Council Member roles and responsibilities; legislative obligations; personal responsibilities; and strategic direction of the Local Government. Continuing/previously elected Council Members are encouraged to participate in nominated elements of the induction program, to assist in fostering a team culture and to refresh their understanding.

#### 4.3 Mandatory Council Member Training

Council Members are required to complete the Council Member Essentials Course within 12-months from the day on which they are elected, unless exempt under Regulation 36 of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*. Council Members should confirm with the Chief Executive Officer whether they are eligible for an exemption.

The CEO will provide newly elected Council Members with information on training options from which the Council Member may select according to their preferred delivery mode and availability. The Shire will make the necessary arrangements for enrolment.

Council Members who are not yet required to complete the Mandatory Training may still choose to participate, with associated costs attributed to the Whole of Council Training and Development budget allocation.

#### 4.4 Continuing Professional Development

##### Formats

Eligible Continuing Professional Development formats include, but are not limited to:

- Short courses;
- Training courses;
- Workshops;
- Seminars;
- Conferences;
- Formal qualifications, or individual units or modules as components of formal qualifications;
- Membership of professional development organisation, where the membership incorporates access to Continuing Professional Development; and
- Fact Finding Tours; and
- Biennial Councillor Study Tour.

##### Outcomes

In order to be eligible for approval under this policy, Continuing Professional Development must be relevant to the role of a Council Member, and offer demonstrable benefit to the Council as a

governing body, the Shire as an organisation, and the broader community.

This includes Continuing Professional Development that:

- Enhances the understanding of Council Member roles and responsibilities, and/or the role and function of Local Government;
- Assists Council Members to develop knowledge and skills in relation to the strategic objectives of the Shire;
- Enables Council Members to further develop personal and professional skills necessary for excellence in performance of the Council Member role; or
- Supports Council Members in developing and maintaining positive and healthy communication, team culture and relationships, to facilitate excellent teamwork to achieve outcomes that deliver good government for the Shire community.

Eligible Continuing Professional Development activities include:

- WA Local Government Association Council (WALGA) and Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) conferences.
- Special 'one off' conferences called for or sponsored by WALGA and/or ALGA on important Local Government issues.
- Annual conferences of the major professions in Local Government and other institutions of relevance to Local Government activities.
- Other Local Government-specific training courses, workshops and forums, relating to the outcomes listed above.
- Training relevant to the outcomes listed above offered by accredited organisations.
- Conferences, training, workshops or seminars that address the initiatives and projects identified in the Shire Strategic Community Plan, Corporate Business Plan or other strategic documents.
- Fact Finding Tours are designed to enable Council Members to travel intrastate, interstate and/or overseas to research, study and lobby for specific issues confronting Council.

Council Members are encouraged to identify and share relevant Continuing Professional Development opportunities with Council and the CEO. The CEO will also identify and inform Council Members of relevant opportunities.

### **Fact Finding Tours**

- (a) Council may approve attendance at fact finding tours but shall apply the following guidelines.
  - (i) The maximum attendance at any tour is to be two Council Members and two staff.
  - (ii) Attendance at a tour shall only take place where there are appropriate funds provided for on the annual budget.
  - (iii) A detailed report on each tour is to be submitted to Council.

## **4.5 Application and Approval**

### **Request for approval**

- (a) Council Members who wish to attend training or professional development may make application by providing the following details to the CEO in writing:
  - (i) Course or event title, provider or organiser name, location and date;
  - (ii) Copy of, or link to program, course outline or other summary of content;
  - (iii) An outline of the anticipated benefits of attendance, with reference to the eligibility criteria in this policy; and

- (iv) Total estimated costs including accommodation, travel and sundry expenses.
  - (v) Applications, including all required details, are to be submitted in reasonable time for registration. Where possible, the Shire will seek to take advantage of reduced prices for early registration.
- (b) Details of Fact Finding Tours are to be arranged in advance so that suitable provision can be made on each years budget. When no details of tours have been arranged or arrangements are incomplete, an appropriate amount is to be included on the budget to cover the cost of an annual fact finding tour.

### **Approval**

Approval for Council Members attendance may be granted by:

- (a) the Chief Executive Officer where the:
  - (i) application complies with this policy;
  - (ii) event is to be held within Australia or New Zealand; and
  - (iii) the Council Member has sufficient funds available in their professional development allocation to meet all costs of attendance.
- (b) resolution of Council where the:
  - (i) application has been refused by the Chief Executive Officer;
  - (ii) application does not comply with this policy;
  - (iii) estimated costs of attendance exceed the available balance of the Council Member's annual professional development allocation; or
  - (iv) event is to be held outside of Australia or New Zealand.
- (c) Council for fact finding tours but shall apply the following guidelines.
  - (i) The maximum attendance at any tour is to be two Council Members and where applicable two staff.
  - (ii) Attendance at a tour shall only take place where there are appropriate funds provided for on the annual budget.
  - (iii) A detailed report on each tour is to be submitted to Council.

### **Limitations**

Training and continuing professional development is for the purpose of enhancing a Council Member's performance of their role. Therefore, in some instances, approval may not be granted where attendance conflicts with scheduled Council or Committee meetings (i.e. a meeting where important strategic decisions are require or where the meeting may lack a quorum), unless Council has otherwise resolved.

Where attendance at a particular training or professional development event would require an extended absence, no more than two Council Members may attend, unless Council has otherwise resolved.

Approval will not be granted for training or continuing professional development that is scheduled to occur in the last six months of a Council Member's term of office.

### **4.6 Sharing of Knowledge**

In order to realise the maximum benefit for the Shire, Council Members will provide a report on their attendance, key features and benefits of the training or professional development at interstate conferences, Fact Finding Tours and the Biennial Councillor Study Tour within one month after

completion. Council Members may include ideas and innovations identified through the professional development for discussion at future Concept Forums, where the matter relates to the Shire strategic objectives.

Knowledge sharing may be provided as a presentation or verbal update to a Concept Forum, or a written report provided to the Chief Executive Officer and circulated to all Council Members. Where relevant, copies of resources obtained at the event may also be provided to the Chief Executive Officer for circulation to all Council Members.

#### **4.7 Registration, Travel and Expenses**

The Shire will be responsible for the costs associated with training or professional development approved in accordance with this policy, as detailed in this section.

##### **Event Registration and Bookings**

Travel, registration fees and accommodation are to be arranged directly by the Shire administration. Council Members are not to pay such costs and seek reimbursement, except in the case of an emergency or unique circumstances and subject to the Chief Executive Officer's prior approval.

##### **Travel**

Where travel is involved, the actual costs of travel to and from the event venue are to be met by the Shire in accordance with the current WA Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Determination for Local Government CEOs and Elected Members (the Determination).

Travel arrangements are to be by the most cost effective and reasonably convenient mode.

A Council Member may seek approval to travel within Western Australia by private motor vehicle and be reimbursed for vehicle costs in accordance with the Determination. Approval may only be granted where the cost is approximately equivalent to the most cost effective mode of travel and a Shire vehicle is not available.

Council Members are able to claim mileage for the following purposes:

- (a) Attending Council and Committee meetings, Concept Forums. and any other prescribed meetings (such as meetings of WALGA Zone, Regional Road Group, Warren Blackwood Alliance of Councils, Minister directed meetings or such other meetings where a Council Member is an appointed representative of Council).
- (b) Council briefings and/or workshops
- (c) Council ceremonies such as Australia Day, Anzac Day or citizenship ceremonies
- (d) Council functions and receptions
- (e) Council Member training and/or seminars
- (f) Attending meetings as a representative of Council at the request of the CEO or government department/agency
- (g) Attendance at the Shire Administration Office or Shire Depot by the Shire President to execute documents, meet with the Chief Executive Officer and/or senior staff and community members or business representatives;
- (h) Any other meeting in which the Council Members presence is invited by the President or Chief Executive Officer.

Air travel is to be by Economy Class at a time that is convenient to the Council Member. As far as is practicable, tickets will be purchased well in advance, and take advantage of available discount fares.

A Council Member may choose to upgrade the mode of travel, however additional costs incurred are to be paid to the Shire by the Council Member before the Shire confirms the booking/s.

## **Registration**

Registration fees may include, where applicable, event registration, conference program dinners, technical tours and accompanying workshops identified within the event program.

## **Accommodation**

Reasonable accommodation will be booked for the Council Member for a room at or in close proximity to the event venue and within the expenditure limitations prescribed in the Determination.

If it is not reasonable to expect travel to occur on the day of the event, the booking may allow for arrival the day prior to commencement, and departure the day following the close of the event.

A Council Member may choose to upgrade their accommodation standard or extend their visit for personal reasons, however additional costs are to be paid to the Shire by the Council Member (including any additional associated or travel costs) prior to the Shire confirming the booking.

Any Council Member 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 Council Member's annual allocation.

## **Loyalty Program and Reward Points**

Council Members are not to obtain personal benefit from expenditure of Shire funds and must not claim personal frequent flyer or accommodation loyalty points for air travel or accommodation paid for by the Shire.

## **Meals and Incidental Expenses**

Funding for meals and incidental expenses is to be provided in accordance with the Determination.

Meal expenses are to be interpreted as reasonable expenses incurred for the purchase of breakfast, lunch and dinner where these meals are not provided at the event or in travel. When meals are included and have been paid for as part of the registration fee or accommodation costs, claims for alternative meals at venues other than the event will not to be paid by the Shire.

Incidental taxi, economy ride share or public transport modes of transport (i.e. to/from airport, event venue) may be claimed for reimbursement on submission of receipts.

## **Travel Insurance – Intrastate, Interstate and International**

Subject to policy wording and conditions, Council Members are covered by the Shire's corporate travel protection for the duration of their travel relevant to attendance at the approved event, including any incidental private travel taken either side or during the event.

Council Members should seek advice from the Chief Executive Officer of the Shire's corporate travel protection policy to determine whether it is adequate for their personal needs and circumstances, and so that the Shire and/or the Council Member can make any necessary alternative arrangements.

## **Accompanying persons/entertainment costs**

Council Members are responsible and will be required to pay all costs associated with an accompanying person attending an event (including conference dinners and functions).

The Shire may coordinate accompanying person bookings and registrations for travel, accommodation and the event/function, with costs incurred to be paid to the Shire by the Council Member prior to the Shire confirming the booking/s.

## **Booking Change/Modification Costs**

Costs incurred for changing or modifying a booking for travel or accommodation, where the change or modification is:

- (a) At the request of the Council Member, are to be paid by the Council Member; or

(b) A requirement or for the convenience of the Shire, are to be paid by the Shire.

### Cancellations

Costs incurred for cancellation of registration, travel or accommodation, where the cancellation is:

- (a) At the request of the Council Member, are to be attributed to the Council Member's individual allocation; or
- (b) A requirement or for the convenience of the Shire, are to be paid by the Shire.

### 4.8 Report on Training

The Shire is required to produce a report detailing the training completed by Council Members during each financial year, in accordance with s.5.127 of the Act.

The report will include the following details of both mandatory training and continuing professional development completed by Council Members:

- Name of Council Members;
- Date of election;
- Whether the Council Member is required to complete Mandatory Training, and if applicable, the due date for completion and date of completion;
- Title of each training course or module completed or event/conference attended;
- The date attended or completed;
- The training provider or event/conference organiser;
- The cost of attendance; and
- Location of the training or event.

### 4.9 Policy Review

The policy is to be reviewed within the first 12-months following each ordinary election in accordance with s.5.128 of the Act.

## 5 Applicable Legislation and Documents

<b>Statutory Power</b> <i>(Acts, Regulations, Local Laws, TPS)</i>	<p><i>Local Government Act 1995</i></p> <p>s.2.7(2)(b) - The council is to determine the local government's policies</p> <p>s.5.126 - Training for council members</p> <p>s.5.127 - Report on training</p> <p>s.5.128 – Policy for continuing professional development</p> <p><i>Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996</i></p> <p>r.35 - Training for council members</p> <p>r.36 - Exemptions from Act s.5.126(1)</p>
<b>Shire Policies</b>	N/A
<b>Related Documents</b>	N/A
<b>Related Procedure</b>	N/A

## 6 Administration

<b>Original Adoption Date</b>	30 April 2020
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<b>Last Variation Date</b>	29 February 2024
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	29 February 2024
<b>Scheduled Reviewed Date</b>	28 February 2027