COUNCILLOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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Date revoked	

Documents superseded	
Related Documents	Payment and Re-imbursement of Expenses Incurred By, and Provision of Facilities to, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors
Relevant delegations	
Responsible Directorate	
Responsible officer	General Manager

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that Councillors have access to training and educational opportunities which will assist them to develop and maintain the skills and knowledge required to perform their civic duties.

Councillor professional development is necessary to develop and maintain Councillor competence and is consistent with the achievements of Council's goals. Councillor professional development will be based around relevance to the individual Councillor and be of benefit to the enhancement and development of the Councillor's skills and abilities with regard to effective community representation.

Background

Councillors are from all walks of life and bring a variety of skills and experiences to their role. Their job is both rewarding and challenging. When they commence their term of office, it is important that councillors have, or may quickly attain, a clear understanding of the system of local government, how their council works and the full range of their roles and responsibilities.

It is equally important that all councillors have ongoing opportunities to undertake appropriate skills development and training in areas needed to assist them to carry out their role effectively.

Objectives

The training made available to councillors will assist them in carrying out their local government duties and will be offered on a continual basis throughout the councillor's term of office.

The Policy will:

- Provide guidelines for Councillors wishing to access any training and professional development programs that may enhance and improve the skills necessary to perform their role and function as Councillors; and
- Provide Councillors with clarity on resource allocation for individual training and development entitlements.

Scope

This policy applies to elected councillors for Brewarrina Shire Council. The policy will be reviewed every 4 years following local government elections.

Principles

Council will ensure that councillors have a clear understanding of:

- the system of local government
- how council works
- their roles and responsibilities

Levels of Training

Training offered to Councillors will be considered:

1. Imperative Training

Training considered imperative and must be attended by all councillors at least once per term includes training that is:

- Vital to the role of councillor
- Specific to the legislative and governance roles and functions, such as:
  - Councillor Induction Program
  - Meeting procedures
  - Code of Conduct
  - Conflict of Interest
  - The relationship between councillors and staff

2. Desirable Training

Training considered desirable is that which is important to the role of the councillor and is in the best interest of the councillor to attend, such as:

- Financial skills
- Planning legislation
- Strategic management
- Community leadership
- Ecologically sustainable development

3. Developmental Training

Developmental training is offered to councillors for the further development of skills or professional expertise. Such training may include:

- Attendance at conferences, seminars and workshops offered by LGNSW, LGMA and ALGA and other private providers
- Informal sessions conducted by council with appropriate guest speakers or trainers
- Purchase of training manuals, discussion papers and the like
- On-line training
- Mentoring

Minimum Training Requirements

- Internal councillor induction sessions
- Compulsory councillor information seminars delivered by the Division of Local Government
- Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest training
- Code of Meeting Practice training

Notification of Training Opportunities to Councillors

Any training or educational opportunities for councillors will be notified to councillors by email or memo from the General Manager.

Every effort will be made to provide councillors with as much notice as possible of upcoming training and educational opportunities. Councillors are also encouraged to visit the ‘Learning Solutions’ section of the Local Government NSW website to identify upcoming training programs. Councillors may also notify the Mayor or the General Manager of any training they may wish to attend.

Approval of Training and/or Expenses

Approval of training and payment and reimbursement for expenses relating to councillor's registration and attendance at training, will be determined in accordance the Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities policy.

A budget allocation will be provided to support the training activities undertaken by councillors and progress against expenditure will be monitored and reported on quarterly.

Reporting

The Executive Assistant will maintain data pertaining to councillor training and development opportunities, including courses, training, workshops and information sessions formally made available to councillors, and a record will be kept of councillor participation at these events.

Training data, that is required to be reported by legislation, will be included in the Annual Report.

Councillor Expectations

- A Councillor who is funded by Council to attend a conference, seminar, forum, delegation or similar event shall participate as a representative of Council, not as an individual;
- Following participation in an event the Councillor is expected to submit a written or verbal report to the next available Council meeting detailing:
  - Whether the objectives of the participation were met
  - The benefits to the Councillor, Council and community; and
  - The value of future attendance by Council at similar events; and
- Councillors must attend training which is required of them.

Councillor Induction Program

Separate to the ongoing professional development of Councillors, the General Manager will determine an induction program for new Councillors. This will be conducted every 4 years after the election of a new Council.