

Council Policy – Councillor Training and Continuing Professional Development

Responsible Directorate	Corporate Services
Responsible Business Unit/s	Corporate Performance
Responsible Officer	Manager Corporate Performance
Affected Business Units	Governance Finance Executive Services

Objective

This policy describes the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale's (the Shire) approach to enable Elected Members to meet their statutory obligations in relation to training and gives effect to the requirement to adopt a continuing professional development policy.

The *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act) provides that:

- each Elected Member must complete training in accordance with the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* (Regulations);
- the CEO must publish a register of training completed by Elected Members; and
- a local government must prepare and adopt a policy (by absolute majority), in relation to continuing professional development of Elected Members.

Scope

This policy applies to all Elected Members.

Policy

Introduction

Elected Members have a unique and challenging role performing their functions under the Act. The Shire recognises the value of training and continuing professional development to build and supplement Elected Member skills and experience.

Elected Members are required to complete Mandatory Training in accordance with the Act and are allocated an annual budget to undertake continuing professional development.

Mandatory training requirements (legislative)

The Regulations requires Elected Members to complete a 'Council Member Essentials' course consisting of five modules. Certain exemptions, specified in the Regulations, apply.

Training must be completed within 12 months of taking office and is valid for five years. The Regulations require that the course is completed through North Metropolitan TAFE, South Metropolitan TAFE, or WALGA.

Non-compliance with the requirement to complete training is an offence and Elected Members will be subject to the penalties outlined in the Act and Regulations.

Following each ordinary election, information on training options from the approved training providers will be provided to Elected Members, who are able to select a training option to meet their learning style and availability.

Unless otherwise resolved by Council, training that is required to be completed under the Act will be paid for separately by the Shire and will not be subtracted from the individual training allocation provided to the respective Elected Member in the budget.

Non-legislative training requirements

One of the key responsibilities of Elected Members is in the recruitment and performance assessment of the Chief Executive Officer. This is reflected in the Standards of CEO Recruitment, Performance and Termination adopted under Schedule 2 of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*.

As a requirement of this policy, every Elected Member must complete the WALGA CEO Performance Review training within 12 months of the adoption of this requirement in the Policy and thereafter within 12 months of taking office.

Prescribed training in this section will be paid for separately by the Shire and will not be subtracted from the individual training allocation provided to the respective Elected Member in the budget.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The Shire is committed to supporting continuing professional development of Elected Members to the benefit of Council, the Shire, and the community.

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

Training paid for in accordance with this policy must have a benefit to Council, the Shire, and the community. Training must relate to the professional development of Elected Members in their role as specified in the Act.

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

Examples of organisations that provide training relating to the professional development, 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
- Institute of Public Administration Australia

In considering training, Elected Members should complete training, where possible, through a Registered Training Organisation.

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

All training undertaken by Elected Members, including conferences paid for entirely or partially by the Shire, will be published on the Shire's website.

Undertaking CPD

Each Elected Member is to be allotted an annual training allocation in the Annual Budget. Unless authorised by Council, travel, accommodation, and other costs associated with attendance at training or conferences are to be debited from an Elected Member's training allocation. Training that exceeds the allocated budget amount may be approved by resolution of Council.

The training allocation is for a financial year and expires at the end of the financial year.

Elected Members interested in undertaking CPD are to submit their request in writing to the Council Support Officer, outlining:

- The course or event title, provider or organiser name, location and date;
- Copy of, or link to the program, course outline or other summary of the content;
- Total estimated cost, including accommodation, travel and other expenses;

If the CPD is in accordance with this Council Policy, the Council Support Officer will advise the Elected Member and make the necessary arrangements in accordance with the Shire's procurement and purchasing rules.

Elected Members wishing to complete a training program that spans across multiple financial years or that exceeds their annual funding allocation may seek approval from Council to have their allocation allotted in advance.

As the expenditure of funds from the Shire's budget can only be authorised by Council or through Council approved instrument of delegation, Elected Members must follow the procedure set out in this policy prior to making any financial or other commitments on behalf of the Shire.

The Act defines a gift as the conferral of a financial benefit made by one person in favour of another person without adequate compensation. Under this definition, the provision of training to Elected Members at no cost or at a subsidised rate can be considered in a gift in certain circumstances. Elected Members should consult the Council Support Officer before accepting offers of training or attendance at conferences.

Elected Members must not receive personal ancillary benefits associated with travel to participate in training and conferences such as frequent flyer points.

Unless otherwise resolved by Council:

- Elected Members are to use their annual training funding allocation for all training and continuing professional development, except for training that they are required to complete under the Act;
- Elected Members are not permitted to nominate for attendance at a training course or conference paid for by the Shire within three months prior to their term of office expiring;
- Elected Members who do not complete training paid for by the Shire will be required to repay the Shire for the training and associated costs; and

- Any amendments or cancellations to bookings resulting from a change in personal circumstances shall be at the Elected Member's own cost. Any change or cancellation resulting from the Shire's operations shall be communicated to Elected Member's and paid for by the Shire.

Training to be delivered to all Elected Members may be paid from a separate allocation by Council resolution.

Mentoring and coaching

Professional mentoring and coaching are a distinct form of professional development and is outside the parameters of this policy as it relates to training.

When adopting its annual budget, Council may resolve to allocate funding to an Elected Member mentoring and coaching program. Each sitting Elected Member may at any time request to access professional mentoring and coaching services procured by the Shire to a maximum value of the total value of the allocation divided by the number of Elected Members. If there are insufficient funds during a financial year, Council may consider an additional allocation.

Requests to access professional mentoring and coaching services will be managed confidentially by the CEO. Procurement for professional mentoring and coaching services will be conducted in accordance with Council's purchasing policy.

Reporting on training

In accordance with the Act, the Shire will maintain a register on the local government's website detailing the training completed by Elected Members.

In order to complete the register, Elected Members shall, following completion of the training, provide evidence of completion of the training to the Council Support Officer. Elected Members will be asked to confirm their completion or attendance as applicable prior to the publication of the register. The register will state:

- Name
- Each training course or module completed
- The cost of training and any associated travel and accommodation paid for by the Shire
- The training provider or conference name

For reporting purposes, the costs of training completed as a group will be apportioned to each Elected Member that was registered to attend.

Mentoring and coaching will not be included in the register.

Elected Members are encouraged to share learnings and insights from training, including conferences with Council. This could include a summary of the training or conference to be distributed in 'Friday Facts'.

Fees and Expenses

Elected Member training allowances will be made in accordance with Council Policy – Councillor Fees and Entitlements and Council Policy – Travel and Accommodation.

Adoption

Council may amend this policy by Absolute Majority in accordance with section 5.128 of the Act.

Definitions

Nil.

Related Documents

- Council Policy – Councillor and CEO Attendance at Events
- Council Policy – Travel and Accommodation
- Council Policy – Councillor Fees and Entitlements
- Council Policy – Procurement of Goods and Services up to \$250,000

Legislation / Local Law Requirements

- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*

Amendment Record

Relevant Delegations		Nil.	
		Date	Resolution Number
Council Adoption		16 December 2019	OCM301/12/19
Version	Date	Resolution Number	Amendment Details
2	19 July 2021	OCM194/07/21	
3	18 July 2022	OCM174/07/22	
4	17 March 2025	OCM068/03/25	Formatting, clarification on CPD approval process, update to align with new and impending legislative amendments and consistency of terms used.