

WALGA Template

Council Member Continuing Professional Development Policy

WALGA Note:

*WALGA provides this template policy as a **guide** for Local Governments. It includes suggested components and wording only. Local Governments should review this policy content and consider, develop and implement policy suitable to their operational requirements. Detailed commentary is provided to outline possible options, and should be deleted before policy adoption.*

Remember:

Policy implementation is given effect through appropriate induction, ongoing training and operational procedures that evidence Council Members and Employees have been made aware of and are accountable for their obligations and responsibilities.

Template Policy Commentary

As there is scope for a range of approaches to Continuing Professional Development, the following comments outline the approach taken in this Template Policy, and discusses matters for further consideration by Local Governments.

Part 1 - Budget Allocations

Local Governments should consider how the budget for Continuing Professional Development will be structured. This Template Policy proposes an allocation for Council as a whole, as well as individual allocations for each Council Member. This ensures that each Council Member has equitable access to funding, and that the expenditure of funds on individual Continuing Professional Development is not to the detriment of Council Member Induction and Council Capacity Building. Local Governments may wish to consider whether to specify the allocation \$value amounts in the policy (subject to CPI increments annually).

This Template Policy is drafted on the basis that Mandatory Training will be funded from the group allocation, rather than from an individual Council Member's allocation. Local Governments may choose to take a different approach.

Part 2 – Council Member Induction

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) has produced an [Elected Member Induction Operational Guideline](#) that outlines the types of information that should be included in a Council Member induction program. Local Governments may wish to include further details of their induction program in this policy.

During the induction, Council Members could be informed of the Mandatory Council Member Training requirements and the options available for their participation in and completion of the training and assessments. Council Members could also be introduced to the Continuing Professional Development Policy, advised of the budgeted allocation, and invited to begin identifying their collective and individual development priorities.

An induction follow up session could be an opportunity for Council Members to provide feedback on the induction program, and identify collective priorities for further training, which can be addressed through Council Capacity Building. Local Governments may also wish to invite all Council Members to undertake a self-assessment to identify priorities for their individual Continuing Professional Development.

Part 3 - Mandatory Council Member Training

This Template Policy is drafted to allow for two different approaches to Mandatory Council Member Training, and Local Governments should review and delete as applicable.

Local Governments may choose to conduct a procurement process to identify the most suitable/best value training provider and direct Council Members to nominate a delivery mode and time/date that is suitable. Local Governments may wish to arrange onsite delivery where a sufficient number of Council Members wish to complete training face to face. If considered relevant to Council as a whole, this could form part of the Council Capacity Building program.

Alternatively, Local Governments may allow Council Members to select their preferred training provider from the Department's approved providers.

Part 4 - Council Capacity Building

This Template Policy uses the term Council Capacity Building to refer to training and development completed by Council as a group. While each Council Member will have individual development needs and priorities, much training and development may be relevant to all Council Members. Training completed as a group allows Council Members to discuss and apply learning as they go, have a shared point of reference and build communication and relationships. In addition, it may be more cost effective and efficient for training to be delivered to Council as a whole.

WALGA recommends that Council Capacity Building becomes part of the regular informal meetings of Council held by many Local Governments. Depending on the resources and priorities of the Local Government, this could take the form of a presentation by a Planning Officer, a team building session delivered by an external facilitator, or a workshop on meeting procedures.

This Template Policy proposes that a Council workshop is held to develop a Capacity Building program, the delivery of which will be facilitated by the CEO. This workshop is an opportunity for Council to consider their collective strengths and weaknesses, and prioritise the areas for improvement in order to better function as a governing body, and better serve the community. This workshop may also be an opportunity to commence policy review (see Part 9 of this Template Policy), in order to ensure that it is fit for purpose, and aligns with the professional development needs and priorities of the Council.

Part 5 – Continuing Professional Development

This section of the Template Policy provides example generic criteria to define eligible continuing professional development. Based on their own resources and priorities, Local Governments may wish to modify these criteria, or include a list of specific topics or types of training that will be eligible.

5.1 – Application and Approval

A two tier system of approvals is provided in this section. Local Governments may wish to modify the circumstances in which a request may be approved by Council or the CEO. For example, Local Governments may wish to remove the reference New Zealand, so that any request to attend training outside of Australia is referred to Council for approval. Local Governments may also choose to address non-attendance or non-completion of Continuing Professional Development in this section. For example, by specifying that approval may be granted by resolution of Council where the Council Member has not completed requirements for previously approved Continuing Professional Development, or has failed to do so within a reasonable period.

5.2 – Sharing of knowledge

This Template Policy includes a requirement that Council Members who attend individual training or continuing professional development provide a report on their attendance. This allows insights and benefits gained through the training to be shared with all Council Members. In addition, the process of reviewing the training and considering its application to the Council Member role may

be helpful for the Council Member who attended the training. Local Governments may wish to specify the format and timing for the provision of attendee reports.

Part 6 – Registration, Travel and Expenses

Expenses

This Template Policy provides a possible approach to expenses. Local Governments may wish to revise with reference to their resources and any existing policies or processes dealing with travel, expenses and reimbursement.

The current WA Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Determination for Local Government CEOs and Elected Members can be accessed via the Tribunal [website](#). The 2020 Determination prescribes the application of the [Local Government Officers' \(Western Australia\) Interim Award 2011](#) in relation to reimbursement for use of a private vehicle, and the [Public Service Award 1992](#) in relation to other travel costs and accommodation expenses.

Insurance

This Template Policy includes a section based on generic information from LGIS regarding the standard inclusions of Local Government Corporate Travel Protection. Local Governments should contact LGIS to confirm the conditions of their protection policy, and for specific advice. In addition, as specified in the Template Policy, Council Members should ensure they are familiar with the conditions of the policy before travelling.

Part 7 – Report on Training

This section of the Template Policy is based on the requirements specified in s.5.127 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, as well as advice from DLGSC on the format and content of this report. If Local Governments choose to modify this section, they should confirm that the minimum requirements of s.5.127 are met.

Part 8 – Council Member Commitment

The Council Member Commitment is intended to emphasise the positive approach to Continuing Professional Development, and commit Council Members to ensuring that they and the Local Government get the best possible value from all training. This section also addresses communication of availability and cancellation.

Local Governments may wish to give further consideration to the way in which Council Members are supported to complete Continuing Professional Development, and management of situations where completion is not achieved within a reasonable period. This is also discussed in relation to 5.1 – Application and Approval, above.

Part 9 – Policy Review

As this Policy must be reviewed following each election, Council has the opportunity to ensure it reflects the needs, priorities, strengths and weaknesses of the current Council and the strategic direction of the Local Government.

While the policy should retain sufficient flexibility to deal with changing circumstances, it may be helpful to modify Part 6 to include particular examples of training or professional development that would be considered eligible.

Council Member Continuing Professional Development Policy

Policy Objective

To give effect to the <<Shire/ Town / City>>'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/ Town / City>>.

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.

Policy Scope

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

Policy Statement

1. Budget Allocations

The <<Shire/ Town / City of XXXX>>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, dealt with under Part 2 of this Policy;
- Mandatory Council Member Training, dealt with under Part 3 of this Policy, and
- Council Capacity Building, dealt with under Part 4 of this Policy.

b. Council Member Professional Development

An allocation for each Council Member to be used for individual Continuing Professional Development, as specified under Part 5 of this Policy. 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.

2. Council Member Induction

Following each election, the <<Shire/ Town / City of XXXX>> 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.

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 <<Shire/ Town / City of XXX>>'s preferred provider is [specify provider], and course delivery is available [delivery modes, options]. Council Members will be provided with enrolment options and the <<Shire/ Town / City>> will coordinate bookings and arrangements to implement their selection.

[OR

The <<Shire/ Town / City >> 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/ Town / City>> will make the necessary arrangements for enrolment.]

Where a majority of Council Members would prefer face to face training, the <<Shire/ Town / City>> may arrange on-site delivery and may coordinate this in cooperation with neighbouring Local Governments to achieve cost savings.

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. Council Capacity Building

Within [a reasonable period/3 months/6 months] after an election, a Council Workshop will be convened to enable Council Members to collaboratively develop a program of Council Capacity Building.

The program developed at the workshop will form the basis for regular training provided to all Council Members as a group, to encourage Council to focus on continuous improvement in its function as a governing body and to address the outcomes set out in Part 6 of this policy.

The CEO will coordinate training in accordance with the agreed program, with details of dates and delivery modes to be determined in consultation with Council Members.

5. 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; and
- Membership of professional development organisation, where the membership incorporates access to Continuing Professional Development.

Providers

Continuing Professional Development should be delivered by industry recognised training providers, peak bodies or professional organisations.

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/ Town / City >> 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/ Town / City >>;
- 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/ Town / City >> 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/ Town / City >>'s Strategic Community Plan, Corporate Business Plan or other strategic documents.

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.

5.1 Application and Approval

Request for approval

Council Members who wish to attend training or professional development may make application by providing the following details to the CEO in writing:

- a) Course or event title, provider or organiser name, location and date;
- b) Copy of, or link to program, course outline or other summary of content;
- c) An outline of the anticipated benefits of attendance, with reference to the eligibility criteria in this policy; and
- d) Total estimated costs including accommodation, travel and sundry expenses.

Applications, including all required details, are to be submitted in reasonable time for registration. Where possible, the <<Shire/ Town / City >> will seek to take advantage of reduced prices for early registration.

Approval

Approval for Council Member 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.

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 required 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.

5.2 Sharing of knowledge

In order to realise the maximum benefit for the <<Shire/ Town / City >>, Council Members will provide a report on their attendance, key features and benefits of the training or professional development within [one month/a reasonable period] after completion. Council Members may include ideas and innovations identified through the professional development for discussion at future Council Member workshops, where the matter relates to the <<Shire/ Town / City >>'s strategic objectives.

Knowledge sharing may be provided as a presentation or verbal update to an informal Council workshop, 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.

6. Registration, travel and expenses

The <<Shire/ Town / City >> 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/ Town / City >> 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/ Town / City >> 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.

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 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.

A Council Member may choose to upgrade the mode of travel, however additional costs incurred are to be paid to the <<Shire/ Town / City >> by the Council Member before the <<Shire/ Town / City >> 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/ Town / City >> by the Council Member (including any additional associated or travel costs) prior to the <<Shire/ Town / City >> confirming the booking.

Loyalty Program and Reward Points

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

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/ Town / City >>.

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.

In lieu of reimbursement, Council Members may request a cash advance prior to departure. This is conditional upon the Council Member providing a written acquittal and supporting receipts to the CEO within 7 days of return from travel. If a Council Member fails to provide a reasonable and satisfactory acquittal inclusive of unspent funds, the value of the un-acquitted funds will be incurred as a debt invoiced to the Council Member.

Travel Insurance – Intrastate, Interstate and International

Subject to policy wording and conditions, Council Members are covered by the <<Shire/ Town / City >>'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 review the conditions of the <<Shire/ Town / City >>'s corporate travel protection policy and member certificate to determine whether it is adequate for their personal needs and circumstances, and so that the <<Shire/ Town / City >> 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/ Town / City >> may coordinate accompanying person bookings and registrations for travel, accommodation and the event / function, with costs incurred to be paid to the <<Shire/ Town / City >> by the Council Member prior to the <<Shire/ Town / City >> 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/ Town / City >>, are to be paid by the <<Shire/ Town / City >>.

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/ Town / City >>, are to be paid by the <<Shire/ Town / City >>.

7. Report on training

The <<Shire/ Town / City>> 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 Member;
- 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.

The report will be provided to Council Members for their information, before being published on the <<Shire/ Town / City>>'s website within one month of the end of the financial year.

8. Council Member Commitment

Council Members are committed to:

- a. Take a positive approach to identifying opportunities for improvement and professional development.
- b. Prepare for, participate in and complete professional development and training approved/booked under this policy.
- c. Apply the benefits of professional development to fulfilling their Council Member role, including by sharing their knowledge with other Council Members.
- d. Make reasonable efforts to confirm their availability, or otherwise, to the CEO before booking deadlines.
- e. When requested, advise the CEO of alternative dates / times that they would be available to facilitate their participation in training.
- f. Advise the CEO, at the earliest opportunity, if they are unable to attend planned / booked training. Where training costs are unable to be refunded, applicable costs will be debited to the individual Council Member's allocation.

9. Policy Review

In accordance with s.5.128 of the Act, this policy will be provided for Council's review following each ordinary election. The <<Shire/ Town / City>> will ensure the policy review occurs within the first 12-months following each ordinary election.

Document Control Box							
Document Responsibilities:							
Owner:	[insert Position Title]	Owner Business Unit:	[insert Unit Title]				
Reviewer:	[insert Position Title]	Decision Maker:	Council				
Compliance Requirements:							
Legislation:	Sections 5.126, 5.127 and 5.128, Local Government Act 1995 Regulation 36, Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 .						
Other:							
Organisational:							
Document Management:							
Risk Rating:		Review Frequency:	[Biennial-following election]	Next Due:	[20##]	Records Ref:	[CP####]
Version #	Decision Reference:	Synopsis:					
1.	[decision date / TRIM Ref]	[brief description of the adoption / changes approved]					
2.							