

<b>POLICY:-</b>	
Policy Title:	<b>Councillor Training and Development Policy</b>
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<b>PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES:-</b>	
Date procedure/guideline was developed:	N/A
Procedure/guideline reference number:	N/A

<b>RESPONSIBILITY:-</b>	
Draft Policy developed by:	Director of Finance and Administration
Committee/s (if any) consulted in the development of this Policy:	N/A
Responsibility for implementation:	Chief Executive Officer
Responsibility for review of Policy:	Director of Finance and Administration

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate Council's commitment to ensuring that the Mayor and Councillors have access to induction and ongoing professional development which will assist them to develop and maintain the skills and knowledge required to effectively perform their civic role and responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1993.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all Councillors of Upper Lachlan Shire Council, including the Mayor.

## **Policy**

Council is committed to developing an induction and ongoing professional development program for councillors to ensure they can fulfil their statutory roles and responsibilities.

The Local Government Act 1993 (the Act), under Section 232, has seen the inclusion in the prescribed role of Councillors the responsibility "to make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform the role of a councillor".

Councils' induction and professional development programs are to consist of three elements:-

1. Pre-election candidate sessions – these are to ensure prospective candidates are aware of what will be expected of them if elected (these are not mandatory but are encouraged);
2. Induction program – this aims to equip mayors and councillors with the information they need to perform their role effectively over the first few months and has a particular focus on building positive, collaborative relationships between councillors and with staff;
3. Professional development program – this is to be developed in consultation with all councillors and delivered over the term of the council to build the skills, knowledge and personal attributes necessary to be an effective Mayor or Councillor.

## **Training and Development Program**

Upper Lachlan Shire Council will develop a training and development program each year so as to ensure that activities available to all Councillors contribute to the achievement of the strategic and good governance objectives of Council.

In preparing the training and development program a range of strategies will be utilised to identify the needs of Council and match these needs against its strategic and good governance objectives.

Particular emphasis will be given to the training needs of new Councillors joining Council following a general local government election or by-election.

This policy is in addition to the Office of Local Government's Councillor Information Seminars, which all Councillors are required to attend following a local government general election.

### **Induction Program**

The induction program will cover:-

- An orientation to Council facilities and the local government area.
- An overview of the key issues and tasks for the new council including; Council's Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, Operational Plan, resourcing strategy and community engagement plan.
- The legislation, rules, principles and political context under which councils operate.
- The roles and responsibilities of Councillors and the Mayor.
- Council's organisational structure, Workforce Plan and the roles and responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer and Council staff.
- What Council does and how it operates, including an overview of integrated planning and reporting, land-use planning, financial management and asset management by Council.
- Key Council policies and procedures Councillors must comply with including the Code of Conduct.
- The role of Council Meetings and how to participate effectively in them.
- The support available to the Mayor and Councillors.
- Information on the process for taking the oath of office and electing the Mayor at the first Council Meeting

The induction program may also include team building activities to help the governing body establish itself as a cohesive and collaborative team focused on a common purpose with shared values and goals

### **Methodology**

Council will collect information regarding the training and development needs of Councillors and will plan for the delivery of professional development training by utilising the following methodology:-

1. Survey/questionnaire;
2. Interviews; and
3. Workshops.

The Chief Executive Officer is to ensure an induction program is delivered for newly elected and returning Councillors and a specialised supplementary induction program for the Mayor within six months of their election.

The Chief Executive Officer is to ensure an ongoing professional development program is delivered for the Mayor and each Councillor over the term of the Council for the purposes of assisting them to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform their role.

The content of the ongoing professional development program to be delivered to the Mayor and Councillors is to be determined in consultation with the Mayor and each Councillor and is to have regard to the specific skills required by the Mayor, each individual Councillor and the governing body as a whole to perform their roles.

### **Specific Training Needs**

Council recognises that some of the training needs of Councillors will be specific to their legislative and governance roles and functions such as:-

1. Role and Responsibilities of Councillors;
2. Working Together - relationship between Councillors and Staff;
3. Code of Conduct;
4. Conflict of Interest
5. Code of Meeting Practice;
6. Good Governance;
7. Accounting and Financial Reporting;
8. Integrated Planning and Reporting;
9. Strategic Planning.

The list included above may be altered to include specific areas of training and development deemed to be appropriate as situations arise, e.g. media training.

Other training issues will emerge that are directly related to specific service areas and other community issues and address environmental, social and economic challenges facing the community.

### **Delivery Methods**

It is recognised that a range of delivery methods will be required to support the training needs of Councillors, including:-

1. Workshops, seminars and on-line webinars conducted by Office of Local Government;
2. Workshops, seminars, on-line webinars and informal (briefing) sessions conducted by Council with appropriate guest speakers and accredited trainers;
3. Attendance at workshops, seminars and conferences offered by organisations such as Local Government Learning Solutions (Local Government NSW), Australian Local Government Association and other private providers that provide an opportunity for Councillors to gain new skills, network with other Councillors and staff from within and outside of NSW;
4. Purchase of training booklets and discussion papers that could be distributed to Councillors for information; and
5. On-line training delivery.

Upper Lachlan Shire Council's training program will include agreed delivery methods to respond to the needs of Councillors identified during the development of the annual Councillor Training and Development Program.

## **Implementation**

1. Training and professional development opportunities will be made available to all Councillors on a continual basis throughout their term of office.
2. Preliminary induction training will take place as soon as practicable following the declaration of the polls. Depending on the timing and specific circumstances of the election, the full induction training may be completed within two months of the polls being declared.
3. The Code of Conduct and Code of Meeting Practice training will be delivered prior to the first meeting of the new Council.
4. The Mayor and Chief Executive Officer will determine the most appropriate method of training delivery, whether in-house or by external agency.
5. Council's annual budget will need to reflect the level of Councillor professional development as required by this training plan.
6. Reimbursement for expenses relating to a Councillor's attendance at training will be determined in accordance with Council's adopted Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities Policy.

## **Procedure**

Training and educational opportunities for Councillors will be classified as:-

- Imperative
- Desirable
- Development

### *Imperative Training*

1. Training or educational opportunities considered vital to the role of Councillor.
2. This training should be attended by all Councillors.
3. It relates to legislative and governance roles and functions and includes, but is not limited to:-
  - Roles and responsibilities of Councillors (including induction programs for new Councillors);
  - Working Together - relationship between Councillors and staff;
  - Integrated Planning and Reporting;
  - Code of Conduct;
  - Pecuniary Interest and Conflict of Interest;
  - Code of Meeting Practice.

### *Desirable Training*

1. This training is considered important and therefore in the best interests of a Councillor to attend.
2. It relates to the maintenance of good governance and includes, but is not limited to, community issues, environmental issues, infrastructure, social and economic challenges, such as:-
  - Accounting and Financial Reporting;
  - Planning legislation;
  - Strategic Planning;
  - Performance management of senior staff;

- Community leadership;
- Handling difficult people;
- Media skills;
- Internal Audit.

### Development Training

1. This training is discretionary but Councillors are encouraged to accept this training or educational opportunity.
2. It relates to further developing the skills or professional expertise of Councillors, and includes, but is not limited to:-
  - Attendance at Local Government NSW workshops and on-line webinars, whether public, in-house or regional;
  - Seminars and informal sessions conducted by Council with appropriate guest speakers and trainers;
  - Distribution of training booklets or discussion papers for information;
  - Online training;
  - Mentoring.

### **Notification to Councillors**

Any appropriate training or educational opportunities will be notified to Councillors through the Executive Assistant on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer. The Executive Assistant is responsible for planning, scheduling and facilitating induction and professional development activities in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer.

Every effort will be made to provide Councillors with as much notice as possible of training and educational opportunities.

Councillors are encouraged to notify the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer if they become aware of any training or educational opportunity that they wish to attend.

### **Responsibilities**

The Mayor and each Councillor are responsible for making themselves available to attend any development activities identified in the training and development program.

The Mayor and all Councillors must make all reasonable endeavours to attend and participate in the induction sessions and professional development activities arranged for them during the term of the Council.

### **Attendance requirements**

The minimum requirements for Councillors' attendance will be all training courses classified as "Imperative".

Councillors will not be expected to attend training or educational opportunities which they have attended in the preceding 12 months.

## **Responsible Officer**

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that the opportunities for induction, ongoing training and professional development are implemented in accordance with this policy. Council funds are to be approved by the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with Council's Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities Policy. All training is to be authorised by the Chief Executive Officer prior to enrolment.

## **Reporting obligations**

Details of the total cost of training and provision of skill development for Councillors are required by legislation to be included in the Annual Report.

Council will publish the following information in the Annual Report:-

- The name of the Mayor and each individual Councillor that completed Council's induction program (where an induction program has been delivered during the relevant year);
- The name of the Mayor and each Councillor who participated in any ongoing professional development program during the year;
- The number of training and other activities provided to the Mayor and Councillors during the year as part of a professional development program; and
- The total cost of induction and professional development activities and any other training provided to the Mayor and Councillors during the relevant year.

This database will be used to identify gaps in the Councillors' training requirements and will be used to assist in determining the most appropriate method of delivery for formal training and will include an evaluation of the training and development program effectiveness at the end of the term of the Council.

## **Annual Budget Allocation**

A budget allocation will be provided to support the training and development activities undertaken by Council, and progress against expenditure of the budget allocation will be reported on an annual basis.

Council will determine the size of its budget allocation, which may change annually, depending on the nature of issues for which training and development activities may be required to be offered. For example, when a new Council is elected there will be specific issues required to be addressed such as induction training for all new Councillors.

## **Relevant Legislation and Council Policies**

The following legislation and Council policies that are relevant to this Policy include:-

- Local Government Act 1993;
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2021;
- State Records Act 1998;
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009;
- Independent Commission against Corruption Act 1988;

- Office of Local Government, NSW Premier and Cabinet – Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines 2018;
- Councillor Handbook 2024;
- Code of Conduct;
- Code of Business Practice;
- Code of Meeting Practice;
- Records Management Policy;
- Government Information (Public Access) Policy;
- Interaction between Councillors and Staff Policy;
- Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities Policy.

### **Variation**

Council reserves the right to vary or revoke this policy.