

Councillor Induction and Professional Development Policy

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Policy owner:	Manager Governance and Risk
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Wagga Wagga City Council is committed to developing an induction and ongoing professional development program for the Mayor and Councillors to ensure they can fulfil their statutory roles and responsibilities. As part of this program, the Mayor and each Councillor will have a Professional Development Plan that identifies specific gaps in their capabilities (ie their knowledge, skills and attributes) and identify professional development activities to build these capabilities.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to demonstrate Wagga Wagga City 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 ('the Act').

Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors of Wagga Wagga City Council, including the Mayor.

Responsibilities

The Mayor and each Councillor are responsible for making themselves available to attend any development activities identified in the Professional Development Plan. 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 term of the Council.

The Manager Governance and Risk is responsible for planning, scheduling and facilitating induction and professional development activities for the Mayor and Councillors in consultation with the General Manager.

The General Manager has overall responsibility for Wagga Wagga City Council's Induction and Professional Development Program.

Budget

An annual budget allocation will be provided to support the induction and professional development activities undertaken by the mayor and councillors. Expenditure will be monitored and reported quarterly.

Approval of training and/or expenses

Professional development activities that require council funds are to be approved by the General Manager in accordance with POL 025 Council's Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy.

Review procedures

Councils are to evaluate their ongoing professional development program to assist the council to determine the program's effectiveness and to identify areas of possible improvement. The outcomes of the professional development program should, at a minimum, include councillors and mayors demonstrating the core skills and knowledge areas listed in council's needs analysis. The evaluation should assess whether these outcomes were achieved.

Policy Provisions

Induction Program

Council will develop an induction program for new and returning councillors as well as a supplementary program for the mayor to ensure they are provided all the information they need to effectively fulfil their roles in the first few months of Council's term and feel confident in their ability to do so. 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 management strategy and the roles and responsibilities of the general manager and council staff
- what Council does and how it operates, including an overview of integrated planning and reporting, land-use planning, natural resource management, community and cultural services, financial management council businesses, economic development, infrastructure 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 and where they can go to get more information or assistance, and
- information on the process for taking the oath of office and electing the mayor at the first council meeting

In the case of the Mayor, the program will also cover:

- how to be an effective leader of the governing body and the council
- the role of the Chair and how to chair council meetings
- the mayor's role in integrated planning and reporting
- the mayor's role and responsibilities under the code of conduct
- the mayor's role and responsibilities in relation to the general manager's employment
- the mayor's role at regional and other representative bodies, and
- the mayor's civic and ceremonial role.

The mayor and councillors must have a working knowledge and understanding of these areas by the end of the induction program.

The induction program will 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. Activities will aim to ensure mayors and councillors:

- identify how they would like to work together as a team and identify a common vision for the governing body
- build relationships with each other based on trust and mutual respect that facilitate collaboration and using that as a basis to also then develop professional, respectful relationships with staff
- contribute to a positive and ethical culture within the governing body
- work towards consensus as members of the governing body for the benefit of the community
- develop respectful negotiation skills and manage alternative views within the governing body without damaging relationships
- understand what supports or undermines the effective functioning of the governing body
- respect the diversity of skills and experiences on the governing body, and
- communicate and uphold the decisions of Council in a respectful way, even if their own position was not adopted.

Activities should also help the mayor, as the leader of the governing body, to:

- act as a stabilising influence and show leadership, and
- promote a culture of integrity and accountability within Council and when representing Council in the community and elsewhere.

The mayor and councillors, including those re-elected to office, must attend all induction sessions.

Council will evaluate the induction program at the end of each council term to determine whether it has achieved these outcomes, and to identify and address areas for improvement.

Ongoing Professional Development Program

An individual ongoing professional development plan will be developed for the mayor and each councillor to address any gaps in the capabilities (ie the knowledge, skills and attributes) needed to effectively fulfil their role.

Professional development activities will, wherever possible, follow the 70/20/10 principle. The 70/20/10 principle requires that:

- 70% of learning activities are provided via learning and developing from experience – for example, on-the-job training, self-directed learning, developmental roles, problem solving, exposure and practice
- 20% of learning activities are provided via learning and training through others – for example, personal or professional networks, coaching, mentoring, feedback, memberships and professional associations, and
- 10% of learning activities are provided via learning and developing through structured programs – for example, training courses, external or in-house workshops, seminars, webinars and other e-learning and briefing sessions conducted by the council, external training providers or industry bodies.

The timing of professional development activities for the mayor and councillors will be designed in such a way so as to not overload councillors with learning activities in the early part of council's term. The timing will reflect what knowledge and skills councillors and the mayor need at various points in council's term to undertake their roles.

The mayor and councillors will be provided with as much notice as possible for upcoming induction and professional development activities.

Each professional development plan will span the council's term, and identify professional development activities that the mayor or councillor will participate in. The Mayor and councillors are expected to complete all the activities included in their professional development plan.

To assist in this process, professional development activities will be categorised into the following areas and will be prioritised according to need and approved by the general manager where council funds are required in accordance with council's councillor and expenses and facilities policy.

Imperative Training

Training considered imperative is vital to the role of a Councillor and must be attended by all councillors at least once per term. This training includes specific to the legislative and governance roles and functions, such as:

- Councillor Induction Program
- Meeting procedures
- Code of Conduct
- Conflicts of Interest
- The relationship between councillors and staff

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

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
- Informal sessions conducted by council with appropriate guest speakers or trainers
- Discussion papers, reference and research materials
- On-line training including webinars
- Mentoring

Legislative Context

Councillors are bound by the Local Government Act 1993 and Local Government Regulations 2021. All Mayors and Councillors have a responsibility to make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform their roles.

To support this, the General Manager is required under the Regulation to ensure the delivery of:

- an induction program for newly elected and returning Councillors and a specialised supplementary induction program for the Mayor within six months of their election,
- an ongoing Professional Development Program for the Mayor and each Councillor over the term of the Council to assist them to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform their roles. The content of the ongoing Professional Development Program is to be determined in consultation with the Mayor and each Councillor.

Under the Regulation, Mayors and Councillors must make all reasonable efforts to participate in the activities offered to them as part of an Induction or Professional Development Program. Councils are also required to report on the participation of the Mayor and Councillors in these programs.

Related Documents

- Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy (POL 025)
- Code of Conduct

Reporting Requirements

The General Manager of Wagga Wagga City Council will publicly report each year in Council's 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 Professional Development Program
- the total cost of induction and professional development activities and any other training provided to the Mayor and Councillors during the relevant year.

Evaluation

Council will evaluate the professional development program at the end of each council term to assess whether it was effective in assisting the mayor and councillors to develop the capabilities required to fulfil their civic roles.

Revision History

Revision number	Council resolution	Council meeting date
1	Res No: 08/076.7	31 March 2008
2	Res No: 09/007	27 January 2009
3	Res No: 09/077	27 July 2009
4	Res No: 13/187	29 July 2013
5	Res No: 13/224.1	26 August 2013
6	General Manager approval	August 2016
7	Res No: 17/279	28 August 2017
8	Res No: 20/290	10 August 2020
9	General Manager approval under delegated authority	July 2021
10	Res No. 22/354	17 October 2022