
Policy Owner: Governance and Compliance
Person Responsible: President, Councillors and Chief Executive Officer
Date of Approval: 15 October 2024
Amended:

Objective: To ensure that Councillors have equitable access to a range of relevant Councillor training and professional development opportunities while providing clear guidelines for covering expenses related to conducting Council business, attending conferences, or participating in training.

Policy:

1. Training and Professional Development

Elected Members are strongly encouraged to participate in conferences, programs and training courses specifically designed for professional development relating to their role and responsibilities in local government.

Council shall ensure adequate resources are allocated annually in the Shire's budget to provide the opportunity for Councillors to participate in appropriate training and development. (I.e. \$2,000 per Councillor plus an additional \$3,000 for the President to attend an interstate conference or function annually).

Mandatory Training

Pursuant to the *Local Government Act 1995*, Elected Members must complete Council Member Essentials which incorporates the following mandatory training units:

- Understanding Local Government;
- Conflicts of Interest;
- Serving on Council;
- Meeting Procedures and Debating; and
- Understanding Financial Report and Budgets.

Council's preferred provider for the training is WALGA (WA Local Government Association).

All units and associated costs will be paid for by the Shire and must be completed within the first 12 months following their election to Council. The training is valid for a period of five years.

It is Council's preference that the training is undertaken via the eLearning method which is the more cost efficient form of delivery. It is acknowledged however that there may be Elected Members who prefer to receive training face-to-face and/or opportunities to attend training which is being delivered in the region or in the Perth metropolitan area.

Additional Authorised Training / Conferences

Elected Members are permitted to attend the following training opportunities without requiring further Council authorisation:

- WALGA Elected Member Training Modules, seminars, forums webinars, and workshops;
- WALGA Annual Local Government Week Conference and associated training courses;
- The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) Annual State Conference, seminars and forums; and
- Breakfast or workshop speakers identified by the President in liaison with the CEO and advertised by email.

Requests for participation in additional training or conferences should be forwarded to the CEO for approval, and attendance is subject to a cost limit of \$5,000 per Councillor and \$8,000 for the President annually. All training and conferences must be organised by an industry-recognised training provider.

2. Expenses Related to Training and Conferences

- **Approval and Budget:** Any approval for travel by Elected Members shall be subject to the availability of adequate funds allocated in the budget for this purpose.
- **Prepaid Expenses:** Accommodation, travel, business or conference expenses, and meals will be prepaid where possible.
- **Expense Limits:**
 - Moderate claims for alcoholic beverages, when consumed in conjunction with a meal, are acceptable. Unrelated mini-bar costs, alcoholic beverages, and in-house movie hire are considered personal expenses and will not be paid for or reimbursed by Council.
 - No Business Class or First Class air travel is permitted unless approved by Council.
 - All expenses incurred by an accompanying partner will be at the personal expense of the Elected Member other than shared accommodation costs unless otherwise resolved by Council.

Conference Attendance

- The following conferences have ongoing approval for the Shire President or their nominee and the CEO or their nominee: Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia, Australian Local Government Association - National General Assembly, and National Roads Forum.
- Attendance at conferences not identified in this policy requires a report to Council for merit assessment.

WALGA Local Government Convention: The CEO or their nominee and all interested Elected Members are approved to attend with associated costs (accommodation, travel, meals) covered, excluding partner social or non-business related activities. The Shire President and Deputy Shire President, or their nominees, will be the voting delegates at the WALGA Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Training Days: Elected Members can access an allocation of two training days per year through WALGA or the Department of Local Government, including registration, travel, meals, and accommodation, without Council approval. Training attendance beyond this allocation requires Council approval.

Training Register: A register of elected member training will be published on the Shire of Corrigin website and updated regularly.

Reporting Back on Attendance

Councillors who represent the Shire at meetings or seminars shall make every effort to present a written report back to Council for the Agenda, where minutes are not made available. If a written report is not possible, Councillors may provide a verbal report during the Councillors' report section of the Council meeting.

3. Reimbursement of Expenses

- **Information Technology:** allowance is determined in the budget.
- **Child Care:** Section 5.98 of the *Local Government Act 1995* states Councillors with children are allowed to claim professional child care fees where meetings are scheduled that require their children to be put into child care
 - costs incurred to attend Council meetings are reimbursed at actual cost per hour or \$25 per hour

- Child carer can not be a close relative of the member, being for example husband, wife, grandparent
- Reimbursements will only be paid on production of receipt of costs incurred including dates expenses were incurred
- **Travel Costs:**
 - For local travel, actual costs will be reimbursed.
 - For travel beyond 100 kilometres, costs are reimbursed from the outer boundary of an adjoining local government district.
 - For regional travel, actual costs are reimbursed.
 - Travel by privately owned or leased vehicles is reimbursed at rates specified in the *Local Government Officers' Interim Award 2011*
- **Other Costs:** Reimbursed upon presentation of sufficient evidence of the cost incurred, in accordance with the *Public Service Award 1992*.