

Policy number	Policy 022
Policy title	Elected member professional development
Strategic outcomes supported	<p>CL6 – Finances are managed appropriately, sustainably and transparently for the benefit of the community.</p> <p>CL8 – Visionary civic leadership with sound and accountable governance that reflects objective decision making.</p> <p>CL10 - Legislative responsibilities are resourced and managed appropriately, diligently and equitably.</p>

Policy objective:

To outline the guidelines for participation and entitlements available to elected members for professional development, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995* and *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*.

To enable equity and accessibility to professional development opportunities to enable elected members to fulfil their role.

Policy scope:

This policy applies to elected members.

Policy definitions:

Professional development means attending training, conferences, conventions, summits, forums, workshops, courses and seminars, as a participant.

Individual professional development means any of the defined professional development delivery methods provided to an individual elected member.

Group professional development means any of the defined professional development delivery methods to be offered to Council as a whole.

Mandatory training means training set out in regulation 35 of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*.

Cash allowance means an amount of money paid in advance to an elected member to pay for incidentals.

Policy statement:

1. Council is committed to the professional development of elected members to assist with fulfillment of their role as an elected member.
2. Professional development is to relate to the following key focus areas:
 - a. community leadership
 - b. communication between the community and Council
 - c. determining and reviewing policy

- d. planning for the future
 - e. managing assets
 - f. governing finances
 - g. cultural optimisation
 - h. effective decision-making
 - i. meeting procedures
 - j. risk oversight and assessment
 - k. managing the performance of the Chief Executive Officer
 - l. town planning practices
 - m. advocacy
 - n. local government governance.
3. There are three delivery methods for professional development – mandatory, individual and group.

Mandatory training:

- 4. Pursuant to regulation 35 of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*, an elected member must pass the training course titled Council Member Essentials, within 12 months, beginning on the day on which the member is elected, unless exempt under regulation 36 of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*.
- 5. Council will allocate funds in the annual budget for costs associated with mandatory professional development.
- 6. Elected members will be provided training options for the *Council Member Essentials* course, by the Approved Training Providers. Elected members are to ensure the training is completed within the required 12-month timeframe.

Individual professional development:

- 7. Council will allocate funds in the annual budget for the costs associated with individual professional development.
- 8. An elected member who wishes to attend individual professional development held intrastate must apply in writing to the Chief Executive Officer, setting out how it relates to the key focus areas and how it will assist the elected member in the discharge of their duties.
- 9. The Chief Executive Officer may determine any requests for individual professional development held intrastate, subject to their relevance to key focus areas and available budget.
- 10. Elected members may nominate to attend interstate and overseas individual professional development through a notice of motion to Council. Authorisation is to be through a resolution of Council, subject to relevance to key focus areas and available budget.
- 11. Booking arrangements and payments for all individual professional development, including conference costs, official conference networking functions and meals and tours/inspections that are relevant to the interests of the Town, are to be made by the Chief Executive Officer.
- 12. The Chief Executive Officer is authorised to determine a substitute elected member to attend any professional development in lieu of the elected member approved, in the event that the approved elected member is unable to attend.
- 13. Where an elected member has an electoral term of less than three months to complete, such elected member shall be ineligible to attend professional development, unless it is determined by the Council that attendance by an elected member who is within three months of completion of their term of office would be of specific benefit to the Town, and approval is granted by resolution of Council.

Group professional development:

14. Group professional development opportunities are to be organised for Council as a whole.
15. Council will allocate up to \$20,000 in the annual budget for the costs associated with group professional development.
16. Elected member requests for group professional development will be sent by the Mayor, in writing to the Chief Executive Officer, setting out how it relates to the key focus areas and how it will assist elected members in the discharge of their duties.
17. The Chief Executive Officer may determine any requests for group professional development, subject to their relevance to key focus areas and available budget.
18. Booking arrangements and payments for all group professional development are to be made by the Chief Executive Officer.
19. All efforts are to be made to schedule group professional development at a time when all elected members are available to participate.

Travel, accommodation and expenses:

20. The extent to which an elected member can be reimbursed for intrastate and interstate travel and accommodation costs incurred in any of the circumstances referred to in regulation 32(1) of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 is as determined by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal from time to time.
21. Travel, accommodation and any cash allowances will be in addition to the annual professional development allowance of \$2,500.

Travel

22. Where travel is involved, the travel is to be undertaken with all due expedition, by the shortest most practical route, to and from the professional development location and venue. All reasonable travel costs to and from professional development will be administered by the Chief Executive Officer, in line with the adopted budget.
23. Airline travel shall be by economy class airfare, by the most direct route to and from the airport situated nearest to the professional development venue, unless otherwise approved by the Council. An elected member may have allocated to their personal accounts any frequent flyer points that are provided by the airline.
24. Airline tickets purchased are to be insured to enable the ticket purchase price to be refunded, on occasions whereby a delegate is unable to travel, unless otherwise varied by the Chief Executive Officer.
25. Approval for air travel must, where possible, be sought two months prior to departure. Where practicable, advantage should be taken of available discount fares, including the advance purchase of fares.
26. Where essential, a hire car may be arranged for the conduct of Council business. Costs of bus, train, tram and taxi fares, vehicle hire and parking which are reasonable, required and incurred in attending professional development, will be reimbursed by the Town, on production of receipts.
27. Where in particular circumstances, elected members desire to travel intrastate or interstate by private motor vehicle, they will be reimbursed for actual accommodation costs which are receipted and vehicle costs in accordance with the local government kilometre allowance, up to an equivalent amount that would have been expended, had arrangements been made at the time of request to travel by the cheapest form of air travel.
28. A sufficient number of Cabcharge digital passes may be provided for ease of travel.
29. Car rental use/facilities shall not be permitted, except with the prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer.

Accommodation

30. The Town will pay reasonable accommodation costs for elected members including the night before and/or after professional development where this is necessary because of travel, airline flights and/or the timetables which make it unreasonable to arrive at or return home in normal working hours.
31. Where practicable and available, accommodation shall normally be booked at the professional development venue or if unavailable, at premises in close proximity to the venue.

Cash allowance - payment and reimbursement

32. All cash allowances must be acquitted within two weeks of return. Cash not acquitted shall be refunded to the Town at the same time.
33. Attendees shall acquit the cash allowance on the "Conference Advance and Acquittal Statement Form". Where possible this should be supported by receipts or a Statutory Declaration if a receipt cannot be produced.
34. The administrative arrangements for managing the cash allowance will be the most appropriate to the circumstances, as determined by the Chief Executive Officer.
35. The daily cash allowance shall be paid to cover all reasonable incidental expenses associated with the professional development attendance, such as:
 - a. reasonable telephone and/or facsimile use and/or wifi access
 - b. breakfasts, lunches, dinners and other meals not included in the registration fee
 - c. laundry and dry-cleaning costs
 - d. an optional activity specified in a program
 - e. train, bus, tram, taxi or ride-share fares
 - f. bicycle hire costs
 - g. parking and toll fees
 - h. incidental expenses (eg. newspapers, venue/exhibition entrance fees).
36. The daily expense allowance shall not cover:
 - a. any expenses or time occupied on matters other than Council business
 - b. entertainment costs outside those provided by the professional development provider
 - c. meal claims where meals are provided by the professional development provider
 - d. alcoholic beverages.
37. Documentary evidence in the form of receipts are required for the acquittal of all money paid in advance. If a receipt cannot be produced, a statutory declaration must be produced itemising the expenditure incurred. Should fringe benefits tax be incurred by the Town, it shall be paid by the Town.
38. Elected members failing to acquit their cash allowance, in accordance with this policy, shall have the full value of the cash allowance deducted from the next payment of their meeting attendance fees. Should this be necessary, the Chief Executive Officer shall notify the elected member accordingly, prior to authorising such deduction.

Accompanying person

39. Where an elected member is accompanied at professional development, all costs for or incurred by the accompanying person including but not limited to travel, meals, drinks, entertainment, registration and/or participation in any programs, are to be borne by the accompanying person and not by the Town.

40. The exception to the above being the cost of attending any official dinner, where partners would normally attend.
41. An accompanying person's registration and program fees are to be paid direct by the attendee/delegate to the organiser.

Accompanying carer

42. Where an elected member is attending intrastate, interstate or overseas professional development, and has a disability as defined in the *Disability Services Act 1993*, the Town will meet the cost of a carer to accompany that elected member where that carer is a person who provides ongoing care or assistance.
43. The costs provided by the Town for an accompanying carer will include travel, meals, registration, accommodation and participation in any programs that the elected member they are accompanying is attending.

Reporting:

44. Professional development undertaken by elected members will be reported on the Town's website as it occurs.

Related documents

[Local Government Act 1995](#)

[Local Government \(Administration\) Regulations 1996](#)

[Determinations of the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal](#)

[Public Service Award 1992](#)

[Policy 023 – Provision of information and services – Elected members](#)

[Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates](#)

Responsible officers	Coordinator Governance and Strategy Mayoral and Governance Support Officer
Policy manager	Manager Governance and Strategy
Approval authority	Council
Next evaluation date	November 2027

Revision history

Version	Action	Date	Authority	Resolution number	Report number
1	Approved	21/04/2020	Council	379/2020	Item 15.2
2	Reviewed and amended	20/04/2021	Council	78/2021	Item15.4
3	Reviewed and amended	14/12/2021	Council	314/2021	Item 15.2
4	Reviewed and amended	12/04/2022	Council	73/2022	Item 15.5
5	Reviewed and amended	18/11/2025	Council	234/2025	Item 11.3