



Shire of **Ngaanyatjarraku**
ON A JOURNEY

Council Policy

Policy 1.8 – Elected Member Ongoing
Professional Development

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Council Policy 1.8 – Elected Member Ongoing Professional Development

Policy Objective

To ensure equitable access to ongoing professional development and training opportunities to enable elected members to fulfil their function and perform the duties required of them under the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Policy Statement

In recognition of the complexity and demands on elected members in undertaking their role, the Shire is committed to resourcing elected members to support them in performing their duties of office and to enable attendance at conferences or to undertake professional development training relevant to their role and as required by legislation.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with Policy 1.13 - Attendance at Events.

To ensure each elected member is provided reasonable opportunity to participate in required, as well as optional ongoing, professional development, a budget provision will be included annually for each elected member for planning purposes to meet the costs of registration, travel and accommodation for elected member professional development.

Professional development may include (but is not limited to):

- a) Mandatory elected member training as specified within section 5.126 of the *Local Government Act 1995*;
- b) Study tours;
- c) West Australian Local Government Association and Australian Local Government Association conferences;
- d) Special 'one off' conferences called for or sponsored by the West Australian Local Government Association and/or Australian Local Government Association on important issues;
- e) Annual conferences of the major professions in local government and other institutions of relevance to local government activities;
- f) Municipal Training Service's Councillor Induction Program;
- g) West Australian Local Government Association Elected Member Training and Development;
- h) Training relating to the role of elected members; and
- i) Other local government-specific training courses, workshops and forums, relating to such things as understanding the roles/responsibilities of elected members, meeting procedures, etc.

Approvals of Attendance

If attendance by elected member/s for professional development is considered in the best interest of the Shire, and where appropriate budget provision remains to facilitate attendance, the CEO will prepare details for council to consider for the relevant members attendance at the event as detailed within the 'Approval of Attendance' sections of this policy.

Approvals of Attendance - General

The CEO will prepare an agenda item for council to consider, relating to attendance at professional development, detailing the following information:

- a) Who is providing the ticket to the professional development (the Shire, the organiser of the event or a third party);
- b) The location of the professional development in relation to the local government (within the district or out of the district);
- c) The role of the council member, CEO when attending professional development (participant, observer, presenter);
- d) Whether the professional development is sponsored by the local government;
- e) The benefit to the district of council representation at the professional development;
- f) Which elected member and / or officer should be authorised to attend the professional development; and
- g) The cost to attend the professional development and availability of funding within adopted annual budget.

Decisions to attend events in accordance with this policy will be made by simple majority.

Approvals of Attendance – Short Notice

Where the timing of receipt of an invitation and the professional development itself does not provide an opportunity for council to consider attendance at professional development (such as when received at short notice), the CEO shall:

- a) Prepare an agenda item in accordance with 'Approval of Attendance – General' and circulate to the council via email;
- b) Email correspondence is to set a reasonable period of notice for elected members to respond (not less than 24 hours);
- c) If no objections are raised within the set notice period by an elected member to the CEO, it will be taken by the CEO the elected member agrees with the recommendation;
- d) Decision to attend professional development at short notice will be made once agreement has been received from a simple majority of all elected members; and
- e) Decision is to be presented for noting at the next ordinary meeting of council.

The council may also delegate attendance to professional development to another council member or the CEO or another officer after a decision has been made, by a circular email from

the CEO explaining the proposed change. The subsequent process shall be as described at (b), (c) and (d) above.

Payments in Respect of Attendance

For an invitation to attend professional development where a ticket is provided with no charge, the local government may contribute to appropriate expenses for attendance, such as travel and accommodation, for events outside the district.

For any professional development where a member of the public is required to pay, the council will determine whether it is in the best interests of the local government for a council member or the CEO to attend on behalf of the council.

If the council determine that a council member and/or the CEO should attend a paid professional development event, the local government will pay the cost of the ticket and appropriate expenses, such as travel and accommodation for events outside the district, and the cost of the ticket for events within the district.

Any ticket purchased or additional travel / accommodation costs for the partner or family member of the local government representative is not paid for by the local government.

Study Tours

A study tour is designed to enable elected members (and staff) to travel intrastate, interstate and/or overseas to research and study specific issues fronting Council.

Details of study tours are to be arranged in advance so that suitable provision can be included in each year's budget. When no details of study tours have been arranged, or arrangements are incomplete, an appropriate amount may be included in the budget to cover the cost of an annual study tour.

Study tours will be considered with the following guidelines:

- a) The maximum attendance at any study tour is to be two Elected Members (and two staff);
- b) Attendance at a study tour shall only take place where there are appropriate funds provided in the annual budget; and
- c) A detailed report including recommendations on each study tour is to be submitted to Council for noting.

Special Provision

To provide an opportunity to network with Federal Ministers, Members of Parliament and/or Senior Departmental Officers on issues affecting the Shire, the Shire President (and the Chief Executive Officer), with the prior approval of Council, are to attend an appropriate interstate conference incorporating a visit to Canberra where possible on an annual basis.

Booking Arrangements

Registration, travel and accommodation for elected members will be arranged through the administration office. In general, all costs including airfares, registration fees, and accommodation will be paid direct by the Shire.

Extent of Expenses to be Reimbursed

Expenses incurred with approved professional development in addition to booking arrangements paid by the Shire, may be reimbursed to elected members as set by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal through a determination published in the Government Gazette from time to time.

Elected members will generally not be reimbursed for the cost of meals or refreshments for other people.

Expenses will generally be reimbursed from the time an elected member leaves home to attend an event to the time the elected member returns home. Should an elected member extend a visit by leaving prior to the time necessary to arrive for the event or return after the time at which the elected member could have returned following the event, reimbursements will be paid:

- for the days of the professional development event only; and
- for the cost of travel to and from the airport to the accommodation to be used for the professional development event.

Where a visit is extended, as discussed above, an elected member may stay for the period of the extension in different accommodation to that used for the attendance at the professional development event. In such situations, the reimbursement of taxi fares will be to the estimated cost of travel between the professional development event's accommodation and the airport.

The elected member will be required to pay any greater amount.

Where an elected member attends two professional development events and there is a gap of no more than two days between the conclusion of the first event and the start of the second event, the elected member shall be entitled to reasonable accommodation expenses and other allowable expenses during that 'gap' period. If the gap is greater than two days, only two days reimbursement can be claimed.

Payments over \$82.50 without receipts will not be reimbursed.

Payment of Expenses Reimbursed

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 set by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal through a determination published in the Government Gazette from time to time.

Nothing prevents an elected member from being reimbursed for any reasonable expense incurred whilst attending professional development events where an elected member produces receipts or other sufficient information for the total cost to support their claim.

Reasonable expense may include but are not limited to:

- a) Meals and non alcoholic beverages for the elected member only;
- b) Transport travel – taxi, Uber or public transport; and
- c) Entry fees.

Cash Advances

The Shire will not pay cash advances to elected members.

Elected Member/Delegate Accompanying Person

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

An accompanying person's registration, or accompanying person's program fee, is to be paid to the conference organiser, at time of registration. The Shire will administer the registration and payment process for the accompanying person if the relevant forms and payment are made to the Shire in advance for the accompanying person.

Where the Shire meets an account containing any expenditure or cost incurred on behalf of an accompanying person attending, such expenditure must be repaid to the Shire by the elected member/accompanying person within 30 days of being invoiced for such expenditure following the conclusion of the professional development event.

Guidelines for Conferences and Training Attendance

Generally, no more than two elected members may attend a particular Conference or Training event outside Western Australia at the same time. The CEO or Council may, however, approve attendance by more than two elected members if a particular purpose or need arises.

Attendance at Overseas Conferences

An elected member may, with prior Council approval, attend an overseas conference. The Council approval must include a specific Council resolution indicating how the conference attendance will be of benefit to the Shire and the elected member and detailing any conditions applied.

Report

Upon return from any professional development event as detailed within this policy, where registration and other associated costs are met by the Shire, the attending elected member is required to provide a written report on their attendance and the benefits to them and the Shire, to the CEO. An elected member may alternatively seek to address the Council to give a verbal report that will be noted in the Council Meeting Minutes. The CEO is to record written / verbal reports in a register to support required annual reporting required by legislation.

Policy History

Amendments to this Policy

Amendments to this policy require an absolute majority decision of Council.

N.B. Foreshadowed changes through Section 5.128 Local Government Act 1995 and associated regulations:

- Require a policy to be prepared and adopted by absolute majority;
- Regulations may prescribe form and content of the policy;
- Policy will be required to be published on website and reviewed after each election.

History

Policy adopted: 24 June 2020

Policy reviewed: 28 June 2023

Previous Policy

N/A