

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBERS COUNCIL POLICY

## POLICY STATEMENT

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This policy describes the City of Bunbury's approach to enable Elected Members to meet their statutory obligations in relation to Elected Member training and gives effect to the requirement to adopt a continuing professional development policy.

Part 5, Division 10 of the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act) describes provisions related to the universal training of Elected Members:

- under section 5.126 of the Act, each Elected Member must complete training in accordance with the Regulations;
- under section 5.127 of the Act, the CEO must publish a report on the local government's website within 1 month of the end of the financial year detailing the training completed by Elected Members;
- under section 5.128 of the Act, a local government must prepare and adopt a policy in relation to the continuing professional development of Elected Members.

## POLICY SCOPE

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This policy applies to Elected Members of the City of Bunbury (the City).

## POLICY DETAILS

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### Introduction

Elected Members have a unique and challenging role performing their functions under the Act. The City recognises the value of training and continuing professional development to build and supplement Elected Member skills and experience.

Training can take several forms including formal qualifications, short-courses, seminars and conferences. Training paid for in accordance with this policy must have benefit to Council, the City and the community. Training must relate to the professional development of Elected Members in their role as an elected representative of the City.

Examples of organisations that provide training relating to the professional development of Elected Members, includes, but is not restricted to:

- Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA)
- Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)
- Special 'one-off' conferences called for or sponsored by the WALGA and/or ALGA on important issues

- Annual conferences of the major professions in local government and other institutions of relevance to local government activities.
- Accredited organisations offering training relevant to the role and responsibilities of Elected Members
- Other local government-specific training courses, workshops and forums, relating to such things as understanding the roles/responsibilities of Elected Members, meeting procedures, etc.
- Subscriptions for professional memberships that assist an Elected Member in fulfilling their role on Council.
- Conferences or study tours that address the initiatives and projects that have been outlined in the City of Bunbury's Strategic Community Plan or Council Decisions

### **Mandatory Training Requirements**

The *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* (the Regulations) requires Elected Members to complete a *Council Member Essentials* course consisting of five modules. Certain exemptions, specified in the Regulations, apply.

Training must be completed by all Elected Members following their election within 12 months of taking office and is valid for five years. The Regulations require that the course is completed through either North Metropolitan TAFE, South Metropolitan TAFE, or WALGA.

An Elected Member is exempt from the requirements outlined in section 5.126(1) of the *Local Government Act 1995* if the Elected Member passed either of the following courses within the period of five years ending immediately before the day on which the Elected Member commences their term of office:

- *Council Member Essentials*;
- *52756WA Diploma of Local Government (Elected Member)*;
- *LGA50220 Diploma of Local Government – Elected Member*;
- *LGASS00007 Elected Member*
- The Elected Member passed the course titled LGASS00002 Council Member Skill Set

before 1 July 2019 and within a period of five years ending immediately before the day on which the Elected Member commences their term of office.

Elected Members have a responsibility to complete training in accordance with legislation. Following each ordinary election, Elected Members will be provided with relevant information on training options from the approved training providers. Elected Members will be able to select a training option to meet their learning style and availability.

Training that an Elected Member is required to complete under section 5.126 of the Act will be paid for by the City from the general Elected Member training account as budgeted by Council each financial year. This includes any actual costs (including registration, accommodation, meals and travel) which has been incurred.

### **Elected Member Professional Development Annual Allowance**

1. City of Bunbury Elected Members are entitled to an Annual Professional Development Allowance.

2. The amount will be set annually, as part of the Budget Adoption process. For planning purposes an amount of \$5,000 will be allocated to each Elected Member per annum. This allocation will cover any actual costs (including registration, accommodation, meals and travel) which have been incurred.
3. Unspent funds for individual elected members from each year will carry over for a maximum of two years, after which time any unspent funds may be returned to the elected member training account. Within the two year period, Elected Members may request forward access to the next years training funds, if required.
4. Reimbursement of expenses incurred by elected members for professional development will only be made where the training is considered relevant to their role as an elected member.
5. The training undertaken must be relevant to the role of an elected member, and enhance or develop their knowledge, understanding and performance of their role, in order to make informed decisions and effectively represent their constituents.
6. Subject to budgeted funds being available, the Chief Executive Officer is provided with the authority to approve and arrange the registration and associated travel, accommodation and reimbursement of approved expenses necessary for an elected member to attend training.
7. All requests to participate in training or professional development activities are to be forwarded to the CEO in reasonable time to meet the registration deadline. Where practicable the City will utilise the 'early bird' registration option.
8. An elected member, with the approval of the CEO, may make their own arrangements for travel and accommodation, and reimbursement will be made on presentation of appropriate receipts.
9. All claims for reimbursement must be submitted within one month from the Elected Member or CEO returning from the training and professional development. Final claims relating to the financial year must be submitted within 14 days after the end of the financial year.
10. The costs of the following professional development opportunities will be met from the general elected member training account and not deducted from individual member's allocation.
  - a. Elected Member Professional Development arranged by the CEO as part of the induction of newly elected members and any subsequent training arranged by the CEO for current serving elected members
  - b. Attendance by Elected Members at the Annual WALGA State Conference
  - c. Diploma of Local Government – Elected Members
11. Travel, accommodation and meals costs will be applied as per the Elected Member Entitlements Council Policy.
12. Elected Members may elect to utilise a portion of their allocation for Professional Membership. Professional Membership must relate to their role as an Elected Member in local government and be approved by the CEO.
13. Elected Members who request professional membership to be paid in a year that their term of office is not a full financial year will only have the proportion paid for the days of the membership period they hold office.
14. Internal workshops, strategic planning days, whole of Council training and development and internal training programs are not included in an Elected Member's training and professional development allocation.

## Conditions of Approval for Elected Member Professional Development

Approval must be obtained from Council where:

- Training is requested after 30 June in the year an elected member's term of office ends;
- Where the elected member does not have sufficient funds available in their Professional Development allocation to meet all training and associated costs.
- The request to attend does not comply with this Policy; or
- The event is to be held outside of Australia or New Zealand.

Elected Members cannot enrol in courses that provide a formal qualification (or accreditation) within six months of their term of office concluding.

There is no limit on the number of Elected Members attending a particular training or development activity outside Western Australia at the same time, however, approval of attendance should not impede a quorum at any scheduled Council or Committee meetings.

## Reporting on Training

Reports detailing the proceedings, knowledge gained and outcomes (for the City of Bunbury) are to be prepared by attendees and tabled at the subsequent meeting of Council.

In accordance with section 5.127 of the Act, the City will publish a report on the local government's website within one month of the end of the financial year detailing the training completed by Elected Members.

In order to complete the register, Elected Members shall, following completion of the training, provide evidence of completion of the training to the Executive Assistant to the Mayor. Elected Members must forward records of completion of professional development to the City for inclusion in the Elected Members Training Register on the City's website within 10 days of completion.

The register will state:

- Elected Members name;
- Each training course or module completed;
- The training provider or conference name; and
- The date attended or completed.

## COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

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### LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 1995, Part 5 Division 10*
- *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996, Part 10*

### ORGANISATIONAL

- *City of Bunbury Code of Conduct*
- *Council Policy: Elected Member Entitlements*
- *Council Policy: Elected Member and CEO Attendance at Events*

Document Control					
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DOC/576750[v3]	Council Decision 252/24 26 November 2024	Reviewed with changes including increase to allowance.			
DOC/576750[v2]	Council Decision 291/22 20 December 2022	Reviewed with significant changes including implementing a training allowance for each Council Member.			
DOC/576750[v1]		Section 5.128 <i>Local Government Legislation Amendment Act 2019</i> requires a local government to have in place a policy in relation to continuing professional development of Council Members.			
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