

POLICY

Councillor Induction & Professional Development Policy

Date adopted by Council	29 November 2021
Minute number	H.11.1
Endorsed by	Senior Management Group (10/11/2021)
CM Ref	CD-172/21
Due for review	1 September 2024
Related documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillor Induction & Professional Development Guidelines (Office of Local Government). CM Ref INT-16442/19. Councillor Expenses & Facilities Policy (Upper Hunter Shire Council). CM Ref CD-49/21.
Responsible officer	Manager Governance & Risk
Department/Section	Corporate Services / Governance & Risk
Category	Governance
Community Strategic Plan goal	<p>Goal 8 Provide Community Leadership</p> <p>CS 30 Effectively and efficiently manage the business of Council, while encouraging an open and participatory Council with an emphasis on transparency, Community engagement, action and response.</p>



Policy Statement

Upper Hunter Shire 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 (i.e. their knowledge, skills and attributes) and identify professional development activities to build these capabilities.

Objective

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate Upper Hunter Shire Council's commitment to ensuring that its 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 Upper Hunter Shire Council.

Definitions

All terms used in this policy have the standard dictionary definition.

Policy Details

Induction program

Upper Hunter Shire 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 with all the information they need to effectively fulfil their roles in the first few months of their term as councillor or mayor, and that they 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, financial management 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 (where applicable).

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 that the Mayor and councillors, as a governing body, understand the need to:

- 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
- 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.

Upper Hunter Shire 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 (i.e. the knowledge, skills and attributes) needed to effectively fulfil their role.

Each professional development plan will span the council term, and identify professional development activities that the Mayor or councillor will participate in. Professional development activities will be prioritised according to need and, where council funds are required, approved by the General Manager in accordance with council's *Councillor Payment of Expenses & Provision of Facilities* policy. The Mayor and councillors are expected to complete all the activities included in their professional development plan.

As per the OLG Councillor Induction & Professional Development Guidelines, the 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.



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 the term of the council. The General Manager has overall responsibility for Council's induction and professional development program. The Manager Governance & Risk and Governance & Executive Assistant are responsible for coordinating and scheduling induction and professional development activities for the Mayor and councillors in consultation with the Director Corporate Services and General Manager.

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 Council's *Payment of Expenses & Provision of Facilities* policy.

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.

Reporting

In accordance with the Local Government (General) Regulation, the General Manager will publically 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 a professional development program, and
- the total cost of induction and professional development activities and any other training provided to the Mayor and councillors during the relevant year.



Responsibilities

Councillors

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 the term of the council.

The General Manager

The General Manager has overall responsibility for Council’s induction and professional development program.

Director Corporate Services

The Director Corporate Services is responsible for developing the Mayor and Councillor professional development plans, and meeting all reporting requirements, in accordance with this policy.

References and Related Legislation

- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2005

Version History

Version No.	Date	CM Reference	Reason for Review
1	30/09/2019	CD-117/21 INT-29742/19	Policy created to meet legislative requirements.
2	29/11/2021	CD-172/21	Timed review, updated to align with Model policy provided by OLG. Updated template.