

Bayside Council

Serving Our Community

Councillor Professional Development Policy

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Councillor Professional Development Policy

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Telephone Interpreter Services - 131 450

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Councillor Professional Development Policy outlines the requirements for the Mayor of the Day and Councillors to undertake an ongoing program of professional development to assist them in undertaking their responsibilities of being elected to local government at Bayside Council. This is in addition to Council's induction program following a general election.

The Policy endorses the Office of Local Government's (OLG) Induction Program following general elections and builds on this program to ensure the Citizens of Bayside Council have a well-informed Board of Management.

The Policy also endorses the OLG Councillor Induction and Professional Development – A Guide for Councils (Circular 12-18 June 2012) and requirements to comply with the regulations as may be developed from time to time.

1.2 Background

The Office of Local Government by circular 16-52 dated 22 December 2016 informed Councils of recent amendments to the Local Government Act 1993. One amendment has seen the inclusion in the prescribed role of councillors under section 232 with a responsibility *"to make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform the role of Councillor"*. This policy addresses that requirement.

The Councillor Professional Development Policy outlines the opportunities for Councillors and the Mayor of the Day to undertake professional development throughout their term of office thereby increasing their level of expertise in managing the many facets of local government in NSW. The cost of the program/s will be provided for from the "Value of Expenses" in the Council's Expenses and Facilities Policy as this is an ongoing program and will operate for the term of each Council.

Progress of each Councillor's participation in the OLG Councillor Induction Program (Hit the Ground Running Workshops) and Council's Professional Development and Induction Programs will be reported to open meetings of Council at times outlined in this Policy in addition to any requirements placed upon Council by the OLG or legislation.

This Policy acknowledges the time required to undertake ongoing professional development. Accordingly, Officers will work with the Mayor of the Day and Councillors to ensure every opportunity for inclusion.

It is recognised that persons standing for election to local government have done so on the basis of them desiring to make a contribution to the community in which they live or work and in this regard have committed themselves to providing their time for the betterment of the community.

Prior to election, candidates were able to view Candidate Information session/s on the NSW Electoral Commission website outlining the responsibilities of becoming a Councillor and the time placed upon elected officials. Accordingly candidates elected to Council have been informed of the time commitment required of them.

This policy outlines the various opportunities for Professional Development and Induction identified for all Bayside elected officials as follows:-

- Office of Local Government (OLG) Induction/Workshop
- Bayside Council Induction for Councillors and Mayor of the Day
- Bayside Council Professional Development for Councillors and Mayor of the Day

It is acknowledged that elected officials come from all walks of life with varying degrees of educational development and business acumen. However, with the ever changing demands, facilities and overall aspects of local government, continuing development for all elected officials whether they be first time elected or returning officials with maybe years of experience within local government, the economic and community demands are always changing and may require different approaches to issues than tried and true actions of the past.

The Office of Local Government¹ is developing regulations for a consistent approach throughout the industry for induction and ongoing professional development of elected officials. The regulations are expected to require Councils to ensure annual programs are developed in-consultation with the Mayor, Councillors and the Council with appropriate reporting requirements.

Council's annual Professional Development Program will have regard to any requirements of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 or Guidelines issued by the OLG.

1.3 Definitions

The definitions of certain terms are:

Councillor/s:

Refers to all elected members of council including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Councillors Portal is the official repository and communication channel between council officials. It provides a link to the electronic business papers; council policies; news items; calendar of events; and all matters of relevance to councillors.

OLG:

The Office of Local Government.

Professional Development is an annual program for the ongoing educational development for all councillors during their term of office.

The Act:

The Local government Act 1993.

The Regulation:

The Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.

¹ OLG Circular 16-52 – 22 December 2016 – Induction and Ongoing Professional Development for Mayors and Councillors

1.4 Scope of policy

This policy applies to all councillors ensuring they comply with section 232 of the Act “to make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform the role of a councillor”.

2 Office of Local Government Induction/ Workshop

2.1 Overview

The Office of Local Government (OLG) organises regional induction programs (Hit the Ground Running Workshops) following general council elections. Attendance at this program is strongly encouraged by the OLG and Council. Various dates are available to provide newly elected Officials every opportunity to attend a session. The General Manager is also encouraged to attend the Workshop.

The program is conducted over one day and provides a brief overview of local government operations, roles and responsibilities of elected officials, civic leadership, meeting attendance procedures and outcomes, conduct and ethical decision making, various codes and policies applicable to local government, conflict of interest issues and most importantly how elected officials are expected to conduct themselves under the Model Code of Conduct.

The workshop is generally modified after each general election to keep abreast of changes in legislation and in local government generally.

2.2 Reporting

Attendance records will be kept for attendance at workshop session/s and a report will be presented to an open meeting of Council within three (3) months of the conclusion of the workshops in addition to any other reporting requirements by legislation or as notified by the Office of Local Government.

3 Bayside Council Induction for Councillors and Mayor of the Day

3.1 Overview

Council will undertake an extensive program of induction to provide the newly elected Council with sufficient information and material to support and enable Councillors to undertake their responsibilities as efficiently and effectively as soon as possible after a general election.

Induction sessions will be held on weekdays (generally Wednesdays) and on weekends (Saturdays and or Sundays as required) to ensure information is provided to Councillors in the shortest amount of time.

The Program will include Governance, Financial, Risk, Development, Community & Strategic Planning and Legal to mention a few. These areas of education are vital for

Councillors to undertake their responsibilities as outlined in Section 232 of the Local Government Act.

S232 Role of councillor

- (1) The role of a councillor is as follows:
 - (a) *to be an active and contributing member of the governing body,*
 - (b) *to make considered and well informed decisions as a member of the governing body,*
 - (c) *to participate in the development of the integrated planning and reporting framework,*
 - (d) *to represent the collective interests of residents, ratepayers and the local community,*
 - (e) *to facilitate communication between the local community and the governing body,*
 - (f) *to uphold and represent accurately the policies and decisions of the governing body,*
 - (g) **to make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform the role of a councillor.**
- (2) *A councillor is accountable to the local community for the performance of the council.*

The Mayor of the Day will receive additional support and induction, as required. This will include one-on-one sessions with the General Manager, Manager Executive Services and Manager Governance & Risk given the high interaction between these officers in the daily operations of Council and the conduct of meetings. External professional development courses will be provided where appropriate.

The Mayor has additional roles and responsibilities under Section 226 of the Local Government Act.

S226 Role of mayor

The role of the mayor is as follows:

- (a) *to be the leader of the council and a leader in the local community,*
- (b) *to advance community cohesion and promote civic awareness,*
- (c) *to be the principal member and spokesperson of the governing body, including representing the views of the council as to its local priorities,*
- (d) *to exercise, in cases of necessity, the policy-making functions of the governing body of the council between meetings of the council,*
- (e) *to preside at meetings of the council,*
- (f) *to ensure that meetings of the council are conducted efficiently, effectively and in accordance with this Act,*
- (g) *to ensure the timely development and adoption of the strategic plans, programs and policies of the council,*
- (h) *to promote the effective and consistent implementation of the strategic plans, programs and policies of the council,*
- (i) *to promote partnerships between the council and key stakeholders,*
- (j) *to advise, consult with and provide strategic direction to the general manager in relation to the implementation of the strategic plans and policies of the council,*
- (k) *in conjunction with the general manager, to ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between the council and the local community,*
- (l) *to carry out the civic and ceremonial functions of the mayoral office,*
- (m) *to represent the council on regional organisations and at inter-governmental forums at regional, State and Commonwealth level,*

- (n) *in consultation with the councillors, to lead performance appraisals of the general manager,*
- (o) *to exercise any other functions of the council that the council determines.*

3.2 Reporting

Individual attendance records will be kept for all induction sessions and a report will be presented to an open meeting of Council within three (3) months of the conclusion of induction sessions and any other reporting requirements by legislation or as notified by the Office of Local Government.

4 Bayside Council Professional Development for Councillors and Mayor of the Day

4.1 Overview

Councillors, on a regular basis, via the Councillors Portal, will be provided with a list of development opportunities available to them to undertake during their term in office.

It is expected that Councillors will attend at least one professional development training session in a 12 month period in addition to any induction programs conducted by the Council. Additional development training is strongly encouraged.

Professional Development Programs are generally provided by Local Government NSW (LGNSW) being the peak Association of metropolitan and regional councils. However, other private companies may offer relevant training and development opportunities from time to time.

Councillors are to submit requests to the Manager Executive Services, via the Councillors Portal, to arrange attendance at any training or development courses in accordance with the provisions of clause 11.1 of the Expenses and Facilities Policy.

In addition to training courses or development opportunities identified by Councillors, Council will arrange for internal seminars and guest speakers to address Councillors on topics relevant to the whole Council.

4.2 Reporting

Individual records will be kept for all training and professional development courses attended by Councillors and an annual report will be presented to an open meeting of Council at the end of each calendar year. Attendance records will be included in any other document as required by legislation or as notified by the OLG.

5 Policy implementation

5.1 Policy responsibilities

Council has an obligation under the Act to ensure a suitable program and opportunities are provided to councillors to undertake a professional development program on an annual basis. The implementation of this program rests with the

Manager Executive Services whilst policy development rests with the Manager Governance & Risk.

The Manager Executive Services will also be responsible for coordinating training and maintaining a register for reporting councillor attendance at professional development programs provided and offered to councillors as outlined in this policy.

The professional development training is provided for through the council's Expenses and Facilities Policy funding arrangements.

5.2 Procedures

Procedures for implementing and reporting requirements outlined in this policy rests with the Manager Executive Services.

5.3 Breaches

Breaches of this policy may be considered as a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct.

6 Document control

6.1 Review

This Policy will be reviewed prior to each general election in order for it to be kept up-to-date and in accordance with best practice.

The Director City Performance may approve non-significant and/or minor editorial amendments that do not change the policy substance.

6.2 Related documents

Legislation or Council policies and procedures relevant to the policy are:

The Local Government Act 1993

The Local Government (General) Regulation 2005

The Code of Conduct

6.3 Version history

Version	Release Date	Author	Reason for Change
1.0	14/06/2017	Warren Park	New document