

**POLICY NO LG02**  
**Councillor Learning and Development Policy**

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Governance
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	General Manager
<b>LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN:</b>	... be visionary and accountable leaders who advocate and represent the views of our community in a transparent way.
<b>STATUTORY AUTHORITY:</b>	Local Government Act 1993
<b>OBJECTIVE:</b>	Council is committed to proactively fostering a culture of continuous learning and development by encouraging and ensuring equal access to diverse educational opportunities for councillors. This commitment aims to enhance their knowledge and skills in line with current standards and expectations, empowering them to effectively fulfill their official duties and functions.
<b>POLICY INFORMATION:</b>	Adopted 19 March 2012 – Minute No 03/12.15.4.069 Amended 21 August 2014 – Minute No 08/14.15.5.255 Amended 17 December 2018 – Minute No 12/18.16.3.318 Amended 19 February 2024 – Minute No 02/24.17.2.316

**POLICY**

**1. POLICY PURPOSE**

The Councillor Learning and Development Policy (the Policy) supports Council’s commitment to ensuring councillors are encouraged and have equal access to learning and developmental opportunities to maintain and increase their knowledge and skills based on current standards and expectations.

Council recognises the importance of appropriate learning and development to support and assist councillors in the effective performance of their official duties and functions.

In accordance with this Policy, and any legislative requirements, councillors are to undertake ongoing learning and development activities during their term in office.

When councillors are elected to office, they take the following Oath of Office which includes:

- *carrying out functions and exercising powers to the best of their ability and in accordance with the law;*
- *complying with the Code of Conduct;*
- *engaging in ongoing professional development; and*
- *abiding by principals of good governance.*

Continuous learning by councillors is an investment which enhances the skills and knowledge of individual councillors and helps the Council to achieve its goals. Well informed councillors are also best placed to represent their community.

## **2. SCOPE**

This Policy applies to all councillors.

## **3. PRINCIPLES**

Councillor learning and development is based on the following principles.

Councillor learning and development:

1. increases councillor capabilities to effectively fulfil their roles and responsibilities in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) and other relevant legislation;
2. activities should support capability development as identified through the councillor capability review and development plan;
3. consists of different formats of activities that increase a councillor's skills and knowledge and provides opportunities to network and learn about local government;
4. is supported by Council through documented processes for funding, approving and monitoring learning and development activities;
5. supports fairness, equity, accessibility, and consistency for all councillors;
6. funding is only used for approved purposes; and
7. is reported on annually to promote participation of councillors, raise community awareness, and provide transparency and accountability for Council's expenditure on learning and development.

## **4. COUNCILLOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

### **A. Councillor capabilities**

The Policy recognises the unique role and responsibilities of councillors and the capabilities that are required to fulfil that role. The core capabilities include:

- Display appropriate behaviour
- Build positive relationships
- Understand and fulfil role
- Comply with legislation
- Deliver results through strategy
- Use resources responsibly

As decision-makers and participants in policy process, councillors are not expected, or required, to hold specialist technical knowledge regarding Council activities. However, councillors need to acquire the knowledge and skills to increase competencies in the core capabilities and ensure that they can adequately make informed decisions for their community and act in accordance with the law.

This Policy acknowledges that councillors come from diverse backgrounds where each councillor will have diverse levels of competencies in each of the core capabilities. This Policy intends to build on developing each councillor's competency through learning and development activities and to encourage continuous development throughout the term.

**B. Activities to increase capabilities**

The following applies to both new and returning councillors as it is important that all councillors operate from a uniform knowledge base and have the opportunity to learn about changes in local government.

*Council induction*

Council will deliver a comprehensive councillor induction program within two months of a Local Government election to assist new councillors in understanding and performing their role and to build on the existing knowledge and skills of returning councillors.

*Post-election sessions*

Councillors are encouraged to attend any post-election workshops/seminars conducted by the Office of Local Government (OLG) or the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT).

*Council work-based activities*

Councillors learn and develop through work-based activities including coaching, on-the-job training, workshops, and face to face training sessions and other relevant activities.

*Relationship-based learning activities*

Relationship-based learning prioritises the establishment and maintenance of positive and supportive relationships that will facilitate learning and promote well-being of councillors.

The process of building relationships also has positive impacts on a councillor's ability to build relationships with community members and makes them better placed to represent their views in Council.

Activities can include:

- community of practice;
- mentoring;
- networking events;
- emotional intelligence training;
- team building; and
- other relevant activities.

#### *Online modules*

Councillors are to complete the online learning modules as developed by OLG and LGAT.

#### *Conferences*

Conferences can provide learning and development and networking opportunities.

#### C. Review capabilities and learning and development plan

Councillors should self-assess their skills and knowledge in relation to the core capabilities by acknowledging their strengths and areas for improvement. A councillor's learning and development plan should identify learning and development activities required to increase the councillor's skills and knowledge in relation to the capabilities.

A review of councillor capabilities and the creation of a Learning and Development Plan:

##### a) consists of:

##### i) Addressing the councillor core capabilities as outlined in Part 4A of this Policy through:

- assessment against each of the identified councillor core capabilities;
- identification of opportunities to improve competencies in each core capability and activities to achieve this; and
- learning and development activities to be undertaken to support capability improvement.

##### ii) Identifying particular areas of interest beyond the core capabilities relating to the activities of Local Government which would increase the capability of the councillor to fulfill their official duties and functions

##### b) is to be completed within the first three months after elected to Council and reviewed at least every 12 months; and

##### c) is to be undertaken with the Mayor, General Manager or an independent person engaged by the Council.

## **5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Mayor and councillors

The Mayor and councillors are responsible for:

- completing a review of the councillor capabilities and learning and development plan within three months after being elected to council and reviewing their progress every 12 months with the General Manager, or an independent person engaged by the Council;
- participating in learning and development opportunities provided by Council and others; and
- promoting the importance and value of continuous learning.

The Mayor is expected to mentor and encourage councillors to participate in learning and development.

## General Manager

The General Manager is responsible for:

- Council's induction program;
- the ongoing learning and development of councillors through other activities;
- facilitating the completion and compliance of each councillor's review of the councillor capabilities and learning and development plan; and
- operational matters related to learning and development budgets, processing requests, reporting and any other relevant matter.

## 6. FUNDING

Council will budget to facilitate councillor learning and development. This budgeted expense does not include Council's existing induction expenses.

Councils are to allocate annually:

- \$2,000 per councillor; and
- \$3,000 per Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Approval for learning and development activities should be supported by documentation in the councillor capabilities and learning and development plan.

Council will budget to contribute to the cost of maintaining and developing the Local Government Learning and Development Framework which has been developed by the Office of Local Government and Local Government Association of Tasmania.

## 7. APPROVALS, EXPENSES, AND CLAIMS

Learning and development activities that require council funds are to be approved by the General Manager in accordance with Council's Policy No *LG01 Councillor Allowances and Support*.

Council will pay for the cost of councillors to attend Council approved seminars, conferences and training programmes, including accommodation and travel expenses providing these are arranged through the General Manager once approved in writing by the Mayor.

## 8. COMPLIANCE

### A. Non-compliance with legislation

Any disputes or evidence of non-compliance by a councillor with their obligations under the Act or relevant local government legislation are to be reported to and managed by the General Manager in the first instance. If the matter is not resolved the Director of Local Government is to be notified.

### B. Non-compliance with or disputes about the Policy

Any disputes about the Policy are to be referred to the General Manager in the first instance. If the councillor and the General Manager cannot reach an agreement, the matter will be reported to Council for consideration.

**9. ANNUAL REPORTING**

The Annual Report of Council will report on the operation of this Policy including the completion of learning and development activities detailed in Councillor's individual Learning and Development Plans and expenditure allocated and used for learning and development activities of councillors.

**10. REVIEW**

This Policy will be reviewed every four years after 12 months and not later than 24 months after a normal local government election and if required during the term of Council.