

POL 0049: Elected Member Professional Development

Purpose

To give effect to the Shire of Esperance's commitment to facilitate continuing professional development of Council Members, which enhances their knowledge and develops their skills, thus augmenting Council's capacity for well-informed decision-making and the provision of good government for our community.

This policy provides a framework to assist Council Members to identify and access relevant training and defines the expenses that will be paid by the Shire of Esperance.

This policy supports compliance with sections 5.127 and 5.128 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, which require Local Governments to prepare and adopt a policy in relation to the continuing professional development of Council Members, and to provide annual reports on training.

Scope

This policy applies to Council Member training and continuing professional development, including mandatory training required under s.5.126 of the Act.

Definitions

Act: means the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Practice

1. Budget Allocations

The Shire of Esperance Annual Budget will include –

a. Whole of Council Training and Development

An allocation for Council as a whole, to be used for –

- Council Member Induction, dealt with under Part 2 of this Policy;
- Mandatory Council Member Training, dealt with under Part 3 of this Policy, and
- Council Capacity Building, dealt with under Part 4 of this Policy.

b. Council Member Professional Development

An annual allocation of \$6,000 for each Council Member to be used for individual Continuing Professional Development, as specified under Part 5 of this Policy. Council Members may select training and professional development to be funded from this allocation, subject to approval in accordance with this Policy.

Unexpended allocations at the end of a financial year will be carried forward for a maximum of two financial years, after which any unspent funds will be returned to general funds.

Any professional development proposal that exceeds an individual Council Member's allocation will be referred for Council decision. Alternatively, the Council Member may choose to privately fund any shortfall. This will not be eligible for reimbursement from a future budget allocation.

2. Council Member Induction

Following each election, the Shire of Esperance will conduct a comprehensive induction program, providing newly elected Council Members with information that will support them to understand Council Member roles and responsibilities; legislative obligations; personal responsibilities; and strategic direction of the Local Government.

Continuing/previously elected Council Members are encouraged to participate in nominated elements of the induction program, to assist in fostering a team culture and to refresh their understanding.

3. Mandatory Council Member Training

Council Members are required to complete the Council Member Essentials Course within 12-months from the day on which they are elected, unless exempt under Regulation 36 of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996. Council Members should confirm with the Chief Executive Officer whether they are eligible for an exemption.

The Shire of Esperance's preferred provider is WALGA, and course delivery is available both on-line and face to face. Council Members will be provided with enrolment options, and the Shire of Esperance will coordinate bookings and arrangements to implement their selection.

Where a majority of Council Members would prefer face to face training, the Shire of Esperance may arrange on-site delivery and may coordinate this in cooperation with neighbouring Local Governments to achieve cost savings.

Council Members who are not yet required to complete the Mandatory Training may still choose to participate, with associated costs attributed to the Whole of Council Training and Development budget allocation.

4. Council Capacity Building

Within a reasonable period after an election, a Council Workshop will be convened to enable Council Members to collaboratively develop a program of Council Capacity Building.

The program developed at the workshop will form the basis for regular training provided to all Council Members as a group, to encourage Council to focus on continuous improvement in its function as a governing body and to address the outcomes set out in Part 8 of this policy.

The CEO will coordinate training in accordance with the agreed program, with details of dates and delivery modes to be determined in consultation with Council Members.

5. Continuing Professional Development Formats

Eligible Continuing Professional Development formats include, but are not limited to –

- Short courses;
- Training courses;
- Workshops;
- Seminars;
- Conferences;
- Formal qualifications, or individual units or modules as components of formal qualifications; and
- Membership of professional development organisation, where the membership incorporates access to Continuing Professional Development.

Providers

Continuing Professional Development should be delivered by industry recognised training providers, peak bodies or professional organisations.

Outcomes

In order to be eligible for approval under this policy, Continuing Professional Development must be relevant to the role of a Council Member, and offer demonstrable benefit to the Council as a governing body, the Shire of Esperance as an organisation, and the broader community.

This includes Continuing Professional Development that –

- Enhances the understanding of Council Member roles and responsibilities, and/or the role and function of Local Government;
- Assists Council Members to develop knowledge and skills in relation to the strategic objectives of the Shire of Esperance;
- Enables Council Members to further develop personal and professional skills necessary for excellence in performance of the Council Member role; or
- Supports Council Members in developing and maintaining positive and healthy communication, team culture and relationships, to facilitate excellent teamwork to achieve outcomes that deliver good government for the Shire of Esperance community.

Eligible Continuing Professional Development activities include –

- WA Local Government Association Council (WALGA) and Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) conferences.
- Special 'one off' conferences called for or sponsored by WALGA and/or ALGA on important Local Government issues.
- Annual conferences of the major professions in Local Government and other institutions of relevance to Local Government activities.
- Other Local Government-specific training courses, workshops and forums, relating to the outcomes listed above.
- Training relevant to the outcomes listed above offered by accredited organisations.

- Conferences, training, workshops or seminars that address the initiatives and projects identified in the Shire of Esperance's Strategic Community Plan, Corporate Business Plan or other strategic documents.

Council Members are encouraged to identify and share relevant Continuing Professional Development opportunities with Council and the CEO. The CEO will also identify and inform Council Members of relevant opportunities.

5.1 Application and Approval

Request for approval

Council Members who wish to attend training or professional development may make application by providing the following details to the CEO in writing –

- a. Course or event title, provider or organiser name, location and date;
- b. Copy of, or link to program, course outline or other summary of content;
- c. An outline of the anticipated benefits of attendance, with reference to the eligibility criteria in this policy; and
- d. Total estimated costs including accommodation, travel and sundry expenses.

Applications, including all required details, are to be submitted in reasonable time for registration. Where possible, the Shire of Esperance will seek to take advantage of reduced prices for early registration.

Approval

Approval for Council Member attendance may be granted by –

- a. the Chief Executive Officer where the –
 - i. application complies with this policy;
 - ii. event is to be held within Australia; and
 - iii. the Council Member has sufficient funds available in their professional development allocation to meet all costs of attendance.
- b. resolution of Council where the –
 - i. application has been refused by the Chief Executive Officer;
 - ii. application does not comply with this policy;
 - iii. estimated costs of attendance exceed the available balance of the Council Member's professional development allocation; or
 - iv. event is to be held outside of Australia.

Limitations

Training and continuing professional development is for the purpose of enhancing a Council Member's performance of their role. Therefore, in some instances, approval

may not be granted where attendance conflicts with scheduled Council or Committee meetings (i.e. a meeting where important strategic decisions are required or where the meeting may lack a quorum), unless Council has otherwise resolved.

Where attendance at a particular training or professional development event would require an extended absence, no more than two Council Members may attend, unless Council has otherwise resolved.

Approval will not be granted for training or continuing professional development that is scheduled to occur in the last six months of a Council Member's term of office.

5.2 Sharing of Knowledge

In order to realise the maximum benefit for the Shire of Esperance, Council Members will provide a report on their attendance, key features and benefits of the training or professional development within a reasonable period after completion. Council Members may include ideas and innovations identified through the professional development for discussion at future Council Member workshops, where the matter relates to the Shire of Esperance's strategic objectives.

Knowledge sharing may be provided as a presentation or verbal update to an informal Council workshop, or a written report provided to the Chief Executive Officer and circulated to all Council Members. Where relevant, copies of resources obtained at the event may also be provided to the Chief Executive Officer for circulation to all Council Members.

6. Registration, travel and expenses

The Shire of Esperance will be responsible for the costs associated with training or professional development approved in accordance with this policy, as detailed in this section.

Event Registration and Bookings

Travel, registration fees and accommodation are to be arranged directly by the Shire of Esperance's administration.

Council Members are not to pay such costs and seek reimbursement, except in the case of an emergency or unique circumstances and subject to the Chief Executive Officer's prior approval.

Travel

Where travel is involved, the actual costs of travel to and from the event venue are to be met by the Shire of Esperance in accordance with the current WA Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Determination for Local Government CEOs and Elected Members (the Determination).

Travel arrangements are to be by the most cost effective and reasonably convenient mode.

Air travel is to be by Economy Class at a time that is convenient to the Council Member. As far as is practicable, tickets will be purchased well in advance and take advantage of available discount fares.

A Council Member may seek approval to travel within Western Australia by private motor vehicle and be reimbursed for vehicle costs in accordance with the Determination. Approval may only be granted where the cost is approximately equivalent to the most cost-effective mode of travel.

A Council Member may choose to upgrade the mode of travel, however additional costs incurred are to be paid to the Shire of Esperance by the Council Member before the Shire of Esperance confirms the booking/s.

Registration

Registration fees may include, where applicable, event registration, conference program dinners, technical tours and accompanying workshops identified within the event program.

Accommodation

Reasonable accommodation will be booked for the Council Member for a room at or in close proximity to the event venue and within the expenditure limitations prescribed in the Determination.

If it is not reasonable to expect travel to occur on the day of the event, the booking may allow for arrival the day prior to commencement, and departure the day following the close of the event.

A Council Member may choose to upgrade their accommodation standard or extend their visit for personal reasons, however additional costs are to be paid to the Shire of Esperance by the Council Member (including any additional associated or travel costs) prior to the Shire of Esperance confirming the booking.

Loyalty Program and Reward Points

Council Members are not to obtain personal benefit from expenditure of Shire of Esperance funds and must not claim personal frequent flyer or accommodation loyalty points for air travel or accommodation paid for by the Shire of Esperance.

Meals and Incidental Expenses

Funding for meals and incidental expenses is to be provided in accordance with the Determination.

Meal expenses are to be interpreted as reasonable expenses incurred for the purchase of breakfast, lunch and dinner where these meals are not provided at the event or in travel. When meals are included and have been paid for as part of the registration fee or accommodation costs, claims for alternative meals at venues other than the event will not to be paid by the Shire of Esperance.

Incidental taxi, economy ride share or public transport modes of transport (i.e. to / from airport, event venue) may be claimed for reimbursement on submission of receipts.

Accompanying persons/entertainment costs

Council Members are responsible and will be required to pay all costs associated with an accompanying person attending an event (including conference dinners and functions).

The Shire of Esperance may coordinate accompanying person bookings and registrations for travel, accommodation and the event / function, with costs incurred to be paid to the Shire of Esperance by the Council Member prior to the Shire of Esperance confirming the booking/s.

Booking Change / Modification Costs

Costs incurred for changing or modifying a booking for travel or accommodation, where the change or modification is –

- a. At the request of the Council Member, are to be paid by the Council Member; or
- b. A requirement or for the convenience of the Shire of Esperance, are to be paid by the Shire of Esperance.

Cancellations

Costs incurred for cancellation of registration, travel or accommodation, where the cancellation is –

- a. At the request of the Council Member, are to be attributed to the Council Member's individual allocation; or
- b. A requirement or for the convenience of the Shire of Esperance, are to be paid by the Shire of Esperance.

7. Report on training

The Shire of Esperance is required to produce a report detailing the training completed by Council Members during each financial year, in accordance with s.5.127 of the Act.

The report will include the following details of both mandatory training and continuing professional development completed by Council Members –

- Name of Council Member;
- Date of election;
- Whether the Council Member is required to complete Mandatory Training, and if applicable, the due date for completion and date of completion;
- Title of each training course or module completed or event/conference attended;
- The date attended or completed;
- The training provider or event/conference organiser;
- The cost of attendance; and
- Location of the training or event.

The report will be provided to Council Members for their information, before being published on the Shire of Esperance's website within one month of the end of the financial year.

8. Council Member Commitment

Council Members are committed to –

- a. Take a positive approach to identifying opportunities for improvement and professional development.
- b. Prepare for, participate in and complete professional development and training approved/booked under this policy.
- c. Apply the benefits of professional development to fulfilling their Council Member role, including by sharing their knowledge with other Council Members.
- d. Make reasonable efforts to confirm their availability, or otherwise, to the CEO before booking deadlines.
- e. When requested, advise the CEO of alternative dates / times that they would be available to facilitate their participation in training.
- f. Advise the CEO, at the earliest opportunity, if they are unable to attend planned / booked training. Where training costs are unable to be refunded, applicable costs will be debited to the individual Council Member's allocation.

9. Policy Review

In accordance with s.5.128 of the Act, this policy will be provided for Council's review following each ordinary election. The Shire of Esperance will ensure the policy review occurs within the first 12-months following each ordinary election.

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Document Information

Responsible Position	Executive Assistant
Risk Rating	Medium

Referencing Documents

- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Public Service Award 1992*

Revision History

Date	Version	CM Reference	Reason for Change	Resolution #	Next Review
Jun 2021	1	D21/20126	New policy	O0621-149	Jun 2022
Jan 2022	2	D21/20126[v2]	Biennial review, no change.	O0122-012	Jan 2024
Jun 2022	3	D21/20126[v3]	Include provisions for high level qualifications.	O0622-148	Jun 2024
Jan 2024	4	D21/20126[v4]	Change references of conferences and training to be professional development, minor rewording and formatting.	O0124-004	Jan 2026
Mar 2026	5	D21/20126[v5]	Full re-write based upon WALGA model template	O0326-054	Mar 2028