

**POLICY NAME:** COUNCILLOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT  
**POLICY REF:** C13  
**MEETING ADOPTED:** 26 September 2013  
Resolution No. 260913/29  
**POLICY HISTORY:** 271108/18



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### **OBJECTIVE**

This policy has been established to demonstrate Council's commitment to ensuring Councillors have equal access to training and educational opportunities and have the opportunity to maintain their knowledge and skill base to contemporary standards and expectations.

### **BACKGROUND**

Councillors have or may quickly attain a clear understanding of the system of local government, how their council works and the full range of their roles and responsibilities.

It is equally important that all councillors have continuing opportunities to undertake appropriate skills development and training in areas needed to assist them to carry out their role effectively.

Currently there are no specific legislative requirements pertaining to councillor training or education. However, the Division of Local Government strongly encourages councils to develop training programs and encourage continuing development programs to support councillors in their role.

### **DEFINITIONS**

In this Policy the following definitions apply:

<b>Council</b>	Ballina Shire Council
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
<b>Reg</b>	Local Government (General) Regulation 2005
<b>Policy</b>	Councillor Training & Development Policy
<b>the Division</b>	Division of Local Government
<b>LGNSW</b>	Local Government NSW
<b>LGMA</b>	Local Government Managers Association
<b>Training</b>	Educational &/or Development &/or Training Opportunities

### **APPLICATION OF POLICY**

This Policy applies to:

- Councillors

This Policy has been prepared with reference to:

- Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy
- Local Government NSW Training and Development Plan

- Division of Local Government Circular 07/22 – Guidelines for the Payment of Expenses and the Provision of Facilities to Mayors and Councillors.
- Division of Local Government Councillor Development Strategy

As a minimum this Policy should be read in conjunction with Council's:

- Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy

### **POLICY**

The training made available to Councillors will assist them in carrying out their local government duties. Training will be offered on a continual basis throughout the councillor's term.

Training offered to Councillors will be classified as:

- Imperative
- Desirable
- Developmental

#### Imperative Training

Training offered to Councillors is considered *imperative* when:

- it is **vital** to the role of Councillor.
- should be attended by all Councillors.
- specific to the legislative and governance roles and functions such as:
  - Councillor Induction Program
  - Relationship between Councillors, General Manager and Staff
  - Meeting Procedures, and
  - Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct policies as adopted by Council.

Councillors should attend the matters listed as "imperative training" at least once every term.

#### Desirable Training

Training offered to Councillors is considered *desirable* when:

- it is **important** to the role of Councillor
- it is in the best interest of the Councillor to attend

Training may arise from time to time when it relates to the maintenance of good governance. It may include, but not limited to, community issues which address environmental, social and economic issues and challenges, ie

- Financial Skills
- Planning Legislation
- Strategic Management
- Community Leadership
- Media Skills
- Handling Difficult People for Councillors, and

- Performance Management of Senior Staff

Councillors should attend the matters listed as "desirable training" at least once every term.

### Developmental Training

Training offered to councillors is considered *developmental* when:

- it is aimed at further developing the skills or professional expertise of the Councillor.

Councillors are encouraged to accept training classified as *developmental*. Such training may include, but not limited to:

- attendance at LGNSW workshops whether public, in house, regional programs, induction seminars,
- seminars and informal sessions conducted by Council with appropriate guest speakers and trainers,
- purchase of training booklets and discussion papers that could be distributed to councillors for information,
- on-line training delivery, and
- mentoring.

### **Minimum Training Requirements**

The minimum requirements for Councillor training are:

- Internal Councillor Induction Sessions
- Councillor Information Seminars as delivered by the Division and LGNSW.

### **Approval of Training Payment of Expenses**

Approval for training and reimbursement for expenses relating to a Councillor's attendance at training will be determined in accordance with Ballina Shire Council's "Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy".

### **Notification to Councillors**

- Every effort will be made by the Mayor and / or General Manager to provide Councillors with as much notice as possible of upcoming training.
- Councillors are encouraged to visit the "learning solutions" section of the Local Government NSW (LGNSW) website ([www.lgnsw.org.au](http://www.lgnsw.org.au)) to identify upcoming training programs
- Councillors may also notify the Mayor or General Manager of any training that they may wish to attend.

### **Recording and Reporting**

The data to be maintained will include:

- Courses, workshops or information sessions formally made available to councillors
- Classification of training made available under this policy; and
- Councillors who have undertaken the training
- Data that is required by legislation will be published in the Annual Report.

## 10.6 Policy (Review) - Councillor Training and Development.DOC

- Reports relating to training for Councillors will be made available at any other times, by the request to Council, Mayor or General Manager.
- A training database will be used to identify gaps in the Council training requirements and will be used to determine the delivery of formal training.

### **REVIEW**

This policy is to be reviewed every four years.

<b>Circular Details</b>	Circular No 17-39 / 6 December 2017 / A573908
<b>Previous Circular</b>	16-52 <i>Induction and Professional Development for Mayors and Councillors</i>
<b>Who should read this</b>	Mayors / Councillors / General Managers / Council governance staff
<b>Contact</b>	Council Governance Team – 02 4428 4100
<b>Action required</b>	Response to OLG

## Consultation on the Proposed Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines

### What's new or changing

- Amendments made to the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) by the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Act 2016* in August 2016 saw the inclusion in the prescribed role of councillors under section 232 a responsibility "to make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform the role of a councillor".
- In support of this, the amendments allow regulations to be made for induction and other professional development for mayors and councillors. The proposed regulations are described in the attachment to this circular.
- The Office of Local Government (OLG) has prepared guidelines to assist councils to develop and deliver induction and ongoing professional development activities for their mayor and councillors in compliance with the proposed regulations. These will be issued under section 23A of the Act.
- OLG has issued a consultation draft of the proposed guidelines for comment prior to their being finalised.

### What this will mean for your council

- Under the guidelines, councils' induction and professional development programs are to consist of three elements:
  - *Pre-election candidate sessions* – these are to ensure prospective candidates are aware of what will be expected of them if elected (these are not mandatory but are encouraged)
  - *Induction program* – this aims to equip mayors and councillors with the information they need to perform their role effectively over the first few months and has a particular focus on building positive, collaborative relationships between councillors and with staff
  - *Professional development program* – this is to be developed in consultation with all councillors and delivered over the term of the council to build the skills, knowledge and personal attributes necessary to be an effective mayor or councillor.
- Councils will be required to report to the council on the induction and ongoing professional development activities offered to the mayor and each councillor and whether they participated in them and to make this information publicly available on their websites.

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## 10.6 Policy (Review) - Councillor Training and Development.DOC

### Key points

- OLG is inviting submissions from councils and other stakeholders on the consultation draft of the Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines.
- The consultation draft of the Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines is available on OLG's website at [www.olg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au).
- Submissions may be made by email to [olg@olg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:olg@olg.nsw.gov.au).
- Submissions should be labelled "*Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines Consultation*" and marked to the attention of OLG's Council Governance Team.
- Submissions should be made by COB **Friday 16 March 2018**.

### Where to go for further information

- For further information, contact OLG's Council Governance Team on (02) 4428 4100.



**Penny Holloway**  
**Acting Chief Executive**

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**Attachment**

**Proposed Amendments to the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005**

**Councillor Induction and Professional Development Programs**

- The general manager is to ensure an induction program is delivered for newly elected and returning councillors and a specialised supplementary induction program for the mayor within six months of their election.
- The general manager is to ensure an ongoing professional development program is delivered for the mayor and each councillor over the term of the council for the purposes of assisting them to acquire and maintain the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their roles.
- The content of the ongoing professional development program to be delivered to the mayor and councillors is to be determined in consultation with the mayor and each councillor and is to have regard to the specific knowledge and skills required by the mayor, each individual councillor and the governing body as a whole to perform their roles.
- Mayors and councillors must make all reasonable efforts to participate in the activities offered to them as part of an induction or ongoing professional development program.
- The general manager is to report to the first council meeting held following the completion of the delivery of the induction program identifying the activities offered to the mayor and each councillor as part of the induction program, and whether or not the mayor and each councillor participated in the activities offered to them.
- The general manager is to report to the first council meeting held following 30 June in each year identifying the ongoing professional development activities offered to the mayor and each councillor in the year to 30 June as part of the professional development program, and whether or not the mayor and each councillor participated in the activities offered to them under the program.
- The general manager is to ensure these reports are published on the council's website.
- The Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government may, at the request of a general manager, exempt the council from the requirement to publish details of induction and ongoing professional development activities offered to the mayor or an individual councillor where he or she is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances.



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### **OBJECTIVE**

This policy has been established to demonstrate Council's commitment to ensuring Councillors have equal access to training and educational opportunities and have the opportunity to maintain their knowledge and skill base to contemporary standards and expectations.

### **BACKGROUND**

Councillors have or may quickly attain a clear understanding of the system of local government, how their council works and the full range of their roles and responsibilities.

It is equally important that all councillors have continuing opportunities to undertake appropriate skills development and training in areas needed to assist them to carry out their role effectively.

Currently there are no specific legislative requirements pertaining to councillor training or education. However, the Office of Local Government (OLG) strongly encourages councils to develop training programs and encourage continuing development programs to support councillors in their role.

### **DEFINITIONS**

In this Policy the following definitions apply:

<b>Council</b>	Ballina Shire Council
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
<b>Reg</b>	Local Government (General) Regulation 2005
<b>Policy</b>	Councillor Training and Development Policy
<b>LGNSW</b>	Local Government NSW
<b>Training</b>	Includes training, development and educational programs / courses / workshops

### **APPLICATION OF POLICY**

This Policy applies to:

- Councillors

This Policy has been prepared with reference to:

- Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy
- Office of Local Government - Councillor Handbook (latest edition October 2017)
- Office of Local Government – Councillor Induction and Professional Development – A guide for councils

As a minimum this Policy should be read in conjunction with Council's:

- Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy

### **POLICY**

Council policy is to facilitate training opportunities for Councillors to increase their levels of knowledge and expertise recognising that this investment will enhance the effectiveness of the Council's performance in achieving its goals.

Training offered to Councillors will be classified as:

- Imperative
- Desirable
- Developmental

#### Imperative Training

Training is *imperative* when it represents essential knowledge that a Councillor must have to act effectively, ethically and legally in their role, typically as there is a legislative framework on which it is based. Council has identified the following topics as Imperative Training:

- Councillor Induction Program
- Code of Conduct
- Relationship between Councillors, General Manager and Staff and
- Meeting Procedures.

Imperative training will be offered to all Councillors during the first 12 months of the Council term, with the majority of the training provided within the first three months. All Councillors should attend imperative training and the cost of imperative training will not be recorded against any individual Councillor annual allowance for training as per the Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy.

#### Desirable Training

Training is considered *desirable* when:

- it is important to the role of Councillor and
- it is in the best interest of the Councillor.

It may not be essential for a Councillor to undertake desirable training however the training will help a Councillor more fully understand aspects of their role, along with the various strategic and legislative frameworks in which they operate. This can help improve a Councillor's effectiveness in their role. Council has identified the following topics as Desirable Training:

- Planning Framework
- Chairing and Meeting Procedures
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement
- Financial Skills
- Governance
- Media Skills
- Performance Management for Senior Staff
- Strategic Management

Councillors should attend a majority of the "desirable training" topics at least once every term.

To assist Councillors attend desirable training and to avoid the inconvenience where training programs may not be delivered locally, the General Manager will co-ordinate training programs, for a number of the desirable training topics, within the Ballina Shire local government area, during the Council term, subject to annual budget constraints.

This will typically mean one or two topics are delivered locally per annum.

The cost of this training, where co-ordinated by the General Manager locally, will be classified as corporate training and will not be recorded against any individual Councillor annual allowance of \$5,000 for training, as per the Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy.

Councillors are also encouraged to attend other desirable training opportunities, as they arise, subject to the annual allowance limit.

### Developmental Training

Training offered to councillors is considered *developmental* when:

- it is aimed at further developing the skills or professional expertise of the Councillor.

Councillors are encouraged to accept training classified as *developmental*. Such training may include, but not limited to:

- attendance at LGNSW workshops whether public, in house, regional programs, induction seminars,
- seminars and informal sessions conducted by Council with appropriate guest speakers and trainers,
- purchase of training booklets and discussion papers that could be distributed to councillors for information,
- on-line training delivery, and
- mentoring.

### **Minimum Training Requirements**

The minimum requirements for Councillor training are:

- Internal Councillor Induction Sessions
- Corporate Training Programs co-ordinated by Council and delivered locally, as outlined in this policy.

### **Approval of Training Payment of Expenses**

Approval for training and reimbursement for expenses relating to a Councillor's attendance at training will be determined in accordance with Ballina Shire Council's "Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy".

### **Notification to Councillors**

- Every effort will be made by the Mayor and / or General Manager to provide Councillors with as much notice as possible of upcoming training.

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- Councillors are encouraged to visit the "learning solutions" section of the Local Government NSW (LGNSW) website ([www.lgnsw.org.au](http://www.lgnsw.org.au)) to identify upcoming training programs
- Councillors are encouraged to take advantage of desirable and developmental training opportunities as they arise and attendance can be co-ordinated by contacting the General Manager (or personal assistant), subject to the annual allowance limits.

### ***Recording and Reporting***

- The data to be maintained will include:
  - Courses, workshops or information sessions formally made available to councillors
  - Classification of training made available under this policy; and
  - Councillors who have undertaken the training
- Data that is required to be reported to Council by legislation will be reported as per that legislation and published in the Annual Report.
- Data relating to training for Councillors can be made available at any other times, by request to the Mayor or General Manager.

### **REVIEW**

This policy is to be reviewed every four years.