Councillor Professional Development Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support~~provide for~~ the professional development of councillors enabling them to ~~so that they~~ fulfil their role ~~of a councillor~~[1], ~~which is to~~by:

- Completing the mandatory training requirements legislated under the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act);
- Participating in the decision making of the Wodonga Council (the Council);
- Representing the interests of the municipal community in that decision making; and
- Contributing to the strategic direction of the Council through the development and review of key strategic documents of the Council, including the Council Plan.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all councillors of the Council.

3. Definitions

Professional development: ~~this includes~~ professional development delivered through~~such as~~ conferences, seminars, forums, personal coaching, delegations or similar events. This development may be delivered at the Council, external to the Council, or through on-line platforms.

Training legislated under the Act, being Mayoral training, councillor induction training and annual professional development training, is included in this definition.

4. Policy

The Council will allocate funds through its budget process to meet the professional development needs of councillors in order to support them in their role as councillors~~, collectively and individually~~.~~. The budget will allocate an amount for the development of councillors collectively, as well as an amount for the development of councillors individually.~~

4.1 Mandated Professional Development ~~offered collectively~~

4.1.1 Councillor induction training and professional development training

[1] ~~Section 28(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*~~

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Section 32 of the ~~*Local Government Act 2020* (the~~ Act~~)~~ states that "a Councillor must complete Councillor induction training within ~~6~~4 months ~~after~~ of the day the Councillor takes the oath or affirmation of office".

In addition, section 33A of the Act requires that councillors complete professional development training annually.

Clause~~s~~ 6 and 6A ~~(2)~~ of the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020* set~~s~~ out the compulsory components of the induction training and the regular professional development training, which is to comprise~~address~~:

~~a) the role of a Councillor, a Mayor and a Deputy Mayor;~~
~~b) the role of a Chief Executive Officer;~~
~~c) any practices, protocols or policies in relation to the interaction between members of Council staff and Councillors;~~
~~d) the overarching governance principles and the supporting principles;~~
~~e) the standards of conduct;~~
~~f) misconduct, serious misconduct and gross misconduct;~~
~~g) the internal arbitration process and the Councillor Conduct Panel process under Divisions 5 and 7 of Part 6 of the Act;~~
~~h) engagement and reconciliation with the traditional owners of land in the municipal district of the Council;~~
~~i) giving effect to gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness; and~~
~~j) any other matters relating to governance and integrity which the Chief Executive Officer has determined should be addressed.~~

a) working together in a Council;
b) decision making, integrity and accountability;
c) community representation;
d) strategic planning and financial management;
e) conduct;
f) land use planning;
g) any other matter relating to the role of a Councillor which the Chief Executive Officer has determined should be addressed.

~~In addition to this compulsory induction training councillors will have the opportunity to access other training modules offered by key stakeholder groups such as the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and the Victorian Local Governance Association.~~

Mayoral training

Section 27A(1) of the Act states that a Mayor and any Deputy Mayor or Acting Mayor must complete Mayoral training within one month after their election or appointment.

Clauses 4A of the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020* set out the components of the mayoral training, which is:

a) roles and responsibilities;
b) chairing meetings;
c) engagement and advocacy;
d) leadership;
e) any other matter relating to the role of the Mayor which the Chief Executive Officer has determined should be addressed

4.1.2 Local government industry events

Council will ~~attempt to regularly send representatives to~~support representation at the following local government industry events.

- Australian Local Government Association National Assembly
- MAV Plenary and Annual Session
- MAV Councillor Development Weekend
- Regional Cities Victoria

4.1.3 Site visits

From time to time the Council may confront issues that require a site visit eg: visits to other local government areas to inspect commercial opportunities, libraries, residential developments, recreation facilities, community initiatives, etc. These visits would not form part of the support provided under this Policy~~professional development policy and budget~~, but rather would be funded by the ~~councillors'~~ travel and accommodation budget.

4.2 Individual development

4.2.1 Identifying needs

Independent of the legislated professional development ~~offered to the councillors as a group~~, councillors are encouraged to identify their individual development needs. Each councillor is encouraged to seek the assistance of the Mayor and ~~CEO~~Chief Executive Officer in analysing their particular requirements and in identifying appropriate courses, seminars and training to meet those needs and interests. The development of specific programs for individual councillors does not preclude other councillors from having similar needs and jointly participating in these programs.

4.2.2 Conferences, seminars, forums, or delegations

a) A councillor who is funded by the Council to attend a conference, seminar, forum, delegation or similar event, shall participate as a representative of the Council, not as an individual.

b) Councillors may participate in conferences, seminars, forums, delegations or similar events where it can be demonstrated that attendance will:

- Provide information on a contemporary issue, so that the councillor can contribute to discussion or debate, leading to informed decision making;
- Put forward the Council's viewpoint during formation of a collaborative policy, or stance on an issue;
- Meet community expectations that councillor representation is necessary for the benefit of the community;
- Provide professional development to the councillor in areas relevant to the strategic objectives identified by the Council in the Council Plan; or
- Provide improvements to the built, social, economic and natural wellbeing of the community.

c) Following participation in an event covered by section 4.2.2 the councillor shall submit a written delegates report for inclusion in the Council agenda within 28 days of attendance. The detail in the report would reflect the type and extent of the professional development, but as a minimum should document:
- whether the objectives of the participation were met;
- the benefits to the councillor, Council and the community; and
- the value of future attendance or representation by the Council at similar events.

4.3 Funding

4.3.1 Council will allocate funds for councillor professional development during the budget process each year. The budget allocation will cover all costs associated with the professional development, including travel, accommodation, registration fees, sustenance, and incidentals. This allocation will provide for professional development at two levels:

a) ~~Collective~~ Mandated professional development legislated under the Act for induction training or annual professional development training~~to cover such things as training for a new council and attendance at local government industry events~~.

b) Individual professional development ~~will provide~~ for a set amount for each councillor per annum.

4.3.2 A councillor who does not use their annual allocation for individual professional development cannot carry forward any outstanding allocation into the next financial year.

4.3.3 Any unexpended funds from an individual councillor can be formally transferred to another councillor to assist in funding attendance at a conference or seminar in that same year, providing all other policy provisions and requirements have been met. This transfer of funds would not ordinarily occur prior to March 31 in any financial year and would be

subject to approval in advance as provided for in clause **Error! Reference source not found.**~~4.4.3~~.

4.4 Approval

4.4.1 An application for individual professional development that complies with this policy, including a budget provision, is subject to approval by the CEO, in consultation with the Mayor~~To maximise the effectiveness of allocated resources, the Council will only meet the cost of professional development outlined in this policy, subject to approval by the Council at a Council meeting after consideration of an officer's report~~.

4.4.2 A councillor is required to complete an application form, located in Docs On Tap, to facilitate participation in professional development.

4.4.3 Arrangements for travel, accommodation and the general reimbursement of costs associated with professional development will be in accordance with the Councillor Expenses policy.

4.5 Reporting

Expenditure approved under this Policy will be reported in the Council's Annual Report. Regulation 10(g) of the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* requires that the Annual Report include details of the expenses for each councillor, categorised separately as;

- travel expenses;
- professional development expenses; and
- expenses to support the performance of the role.

5. Attachments

Nil

6. Related policies

Councillor Expenses Policy
Election Period Policy
Model Councillor Code of Conduct

7. Related legislation

Local Government Act 2020
Local Government Act 1989
Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

8. References

N/A.

9. Review

The Council may review this policy at any time but unless otherwise requested at least every four years. The~~Ideally the~~ four yearly review will occur within the first 12 months of a new Council. Minor amendments to the policy may be authorised by the CEO at any time where such changes do not alter the substance of the policy eg: typographical errors, a change to the name of a related policy, or a change to the name of legislation.

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