

## Policy Type

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Council

## Policy Purpose

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To support Elected Members participation in professional development, as required under section 5.126 and 5.128(1) of the *Local Government Act* 1995 (the Act) continued professional development that will improve their skills and knowledge is essential to fulfill their duties and responsibilities.

Training undertaken by elected members must be reported annually.

## Policy Statement

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Continuing professional development for Elected Members ensures they have the necessary skills, knowledge and resources to effectively govern, make informed decisions, engage with stakeholders, and adapt to changing environments. It promotes good governance accountability, and the overall well-being of the community.

The [Professional Development Plan](#) outlines four focus areas to support Elected Members to fulfill their duties as prescribed in the Act.

### (1) Mandatory Professional Development

Key focus areas for mandatory training are orientation, legal and ethical training, governance and decision-making, policy development and analysis and financial management.

All new Elected Members are required to undertake the following mandatory training within 12 months of their election to Council, consisting of the following modules:

- 1.1 Understanding Local Government
- 1.2 Serving on Council
- 1.3 Meeting Procedures
- 1.4 Conflicts of Interest
- 1.5 Understanding Financial Reports and Budgets.

Exemptions for completion of the Council Member Essentials Course are prescribed in the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*.

The following training is mandatory for Elected Members:

- 1.6 Annual review and certification of the Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates (online).



- 1.7 Annual training on the principles of risk management for local government (online).
- 1.8 Record-keeping awareness for Elected Members (online, once per term).

## (2) Recommended Training

Key focus areas for recommended training are strategic decision-making and oversight, leadership and teamwork, effective communication, and stakeholder engagement.

There are several WALGA courses that are recommended to Elected Members in the Professional Development Plan.

Some courses are delivered to the whole Council to facilitate collective understanding of process and knowledge.

- 2.1 CEO Recruitment
- 2.2 CEO Performance Review
- 2.3 Annual mock Council meeting to support effective Council meetings and a collegiate environment.

## (3) Collaboration and Networking

Key focus areas for collaboration and networking are conferences and workshops, intergovernmental collaboration and mentoring and peer support.

- 3.1 Elected Members participate in the *Life Styles Inventory*<sup>TM</sup>. This is an organisational tool that uses both self-assessment and peer feedback to identify individual thinking and behavioural styles.
- 3.2 Elected Members participate in a skills and experience analysis to understand the collective base in the context of the perceived needs of the City.
- 3.3 Council undertakes a biennial review and evaluation of its own effectiveness.
- 3.4 Elected Members may join at least one Standing Committee of Council and may represent the Council on City of Cockburn Reference Groups. There are also External Groups at which Elected Members can represent the City of Cockburn. Appointment to these is made as a decision of Council following an election cycle.

## (4) Personal Development

Individual Development Plans, Continued Learning and Evaluation and Feedback.

- 4.1 A template is provided to Elected Members to create their individual Development Plans. An individual development plan is unique, with the flexibility to tailor it to specific circumstances and achievement of personal and professional goals.

Title	Elected Member Professional Development
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For continuing professional development identified in the individual Development Plans to be funded, they must meet the following criteria:

- 4.2 Build the skills and knowledge of Elected Members
- 4.3 Meet the needs of the community
- 4.4 Fill the gaps of expertise of the Council as a whole
- 4.5 Align with the City’s strategic direction and values

Requests for continuing professional development and memberships to professional bodies are required to be submitted to the CEO for prior assessment and determination in accordance with the above criteria.

(5) Funding

- 5.1 Professional Development will be funded by the City and met from the Elected Member’s Training Allocation, except for the *Life Styles Inventory*™.
- 5.2 Budget allocations will be made annually, with unspent funds rolled.
- 5.3 Expenses for approved Professional Development are:
  - 5.3.1 Registration Fees (including conference dinner and official delegate tours).
  - 5.3.2 Accommodation costs.
  - 5.3.3 All reasonable expenses for example, meals and refreshments, laundry and dry cleaning and fares relevant to the conference, seminar or training.
  - 5.3.4 State and Interstate - Economy return air fare (allowing flexibility for preferred travel arrangements).
  - 5.3.5 International - Business Class travel for flights longer than six hours duration leaving Australia.

Strategic Link:	Governance Framework
Category	Elected Members
Lead Business Unit:	Legal and Compliance
Public Consultation: <b>(Yes or No)</b>	No
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ECM Doc Set ID: (Governance Purpose Only)	11304587

City of Cockburn

# Elected Member Professional Development Plan

# 1. The role of an Elected Member

Generally, local government Elected Members, who include the Mayor and Councillors, do not have any authority to act or make decisions as individuals. They are members of an elected body that makes decisions on behalf of a local government through a formal meeting process. The Community look to their elected representatives for leadership and guidance.

## Role of Mayor

The *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act), s. 2.8 outlines that a Mayor -

- a) presides at meetings in accordance with this Act; and*
- b) provides leadership and guidance to the community in the district; and*
- c) carries out civic and ceremonial duties on behalf of the local government; and*
- d) speaks on behalf of the local government; and*
- e) performs such other functions as are given to the Mayor or President by this Act or any other written law; and*
- f) liaises with the CEO on the local government's affairs and the performance of its functions.*

## Role of Councillors

The Act, s. 2.10 outlines that a Councillor -

- a) represents the interests of electors, ratepayers, and residents of the district; and*
- b) provides leadership and guidance to the community in the district; and*
- c) facilitates communication between the community and the council; and*
- d) participates in the local government's decision-making processes at council and committee meetings; and*
- e) performs such other functions as are given to a Councillor by this Act or any other written law.*

## 2. Professional Development Plan

A Professional Development Plan for Elected Members ensures they have the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to effectively govern, engage with stakeholders, make informed decisions, and adapt to changing environments. It will promote good governance, accountability, and the overall well-being of the community.

This plan outlines four focus areas with key actions to support Elected Members to fulfill their duties as prescribed in the Act.



Having a Professional Development Plan (PDP) for Elected Members is essential for:

- **Effective Governance:** Elected Members play a vital role in shaping policies, making decisions, and representing their constituents. A PDP ensures Elected Members have the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to fulfill their responsibilities effectively, leading to better governance outcomes.
- **Compliance and Ethics:** Elected Members must adhere to ethical standards and legal requirements. A PDP includes mandatory training on ethics, governance, and legal compliance to ensure Elected Members operate within the legal framework and maintain high ethical standards.
- **Enhanced Decision-Making:** Local government decisions have a direct impact on the Community. Professional development equips Elected Members with the skills and tools needed for policy development, analysis, and evaluation. It enhances their

ability to make informed decisions, consider diverse perspectives, and assess the potential impact of their choices on the community.

- **Communication and Engagement:** Elected Members serve as a bridge between the community and the local government. Effective communication and stakeholder engagement are vital for building trust, fostering collaboration, and addressing community needs. PDPs can contribute to enhanced communication skills, public speaking abilities, and stakeholder engagement strategies.
- **Adaptation to Changing Environments:** Local government landscapes are dynamic, with evolving challenges and opportunities. A PDP helps Elected Members stay updated on emerging issues, technological advancements, and best practices. It enables them to adapt to changing environments, make informed decisions, and effectively address the needs of their constituents.
- **Collaboration and Networking:** Collaborating with other Elected Members, government agencies, and community stakeholders is crucial for successful governance. PDPs provide opportunities for collaboration, networking, and knowledge sharing. These interactions facilitate the exchange of ideas, experiences, and innovative approaches to problem-solving.
- **Personal and Professional Growth:** A PDP recognises the importance of personal and professional growth for Elected Members. It encourages them to set goals, pursue areas of interest, and continuously enhance their skills and knowledge. This fosters individual development, improves role satisfaction, and contributes to their long-term success.

### 3. Mandatory Training

Key focus areas for mandatory training are:

- **Orientation:** Providing a comprehensive introduction to the local government structure, policies, procedures, and key responsibilities.
- **Legal and Ethical Training:** Educating members on legal obligations, conflict of interest, code of conduct, and transparency requirements.
- **Governance and Decision-Making:** Developing an understanding of governance principles, decision-making processes, and the role of elected officials.
- **Policy Development and Analysis:** Enhancing skills in policy formulation, analysis, and evaluation to effectively contribute to the development of local government policies and make informed decisions.
- **Financial Management:** Gaining knowledge in budgeting, financial planning, and reporting to ensure Elected Members have a solid understanding of financial matters to make informed decisions on resource allocation.

On 27 June 2019, changes to the *Local Government Act 1995* were passed by Parliament which require all Elected Members to undertake training within the first 12 months of being elected. The changes were introduced in recognition of the unique and challenging role Elected Members have. The training course, Council Member Essentials, has been developed to provide Elected Members with the skills and knowledge to perform their role as leaders in their district. Training can be delivered face to face (F2F) at WALGA, or via eLearning (eL).

#### Actions:

1. Elected Members undertake the five foundational units, Council Member Essentials, within the first 12 months of being elected:
  - a) Understanding local government (F2F/eL)
  - b) Serving on council (F2F/eL)
  - c) Meeting procedures (F2F/eL)
  - d) Conflicts of interest (F2F/eL)
  - e) Understanding of financial reports and budgets (F2F/eL)

*All council members must complete the Council Member Essentials course unless, in the previous five years, they have passed the Diploma of Local Government 52756WA (Elected Member) or the course titled LGASS00002 Elected Member Skill Set.*

2. Annually, Elected Members review and certify the *Code Of Conduct For Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates* (eL).
3. Annually, Elected Members undertake online training on the principles of risk management for local government.



4. Elected Members undertake Record keeping awareness for Elected Members training during their term. Good recordkeeping ensures accountability and transparency for the Local Government and the community Elected Members serve.
5. An induction program is provided for all newly Elected Members in the week following the Election. This will include physical attendance at City facilities with each Division providing a detailed overview so that the value of the Elected Member's contribution can be realised sooner.
6. Elected Members undertake an annual bus-tour of all Major Capital Projects and significant locations in the City of Cockburn.

## 4. Recommended Training

Key focus areas for recommended training are:

- **Strategic Decision Making and Oversight:** Explore links between planning, policy development and major strategy documents such as integrated planning and reporting, asset management and infrastructure plans to ensure sound contribution to high level strategic decision making.
- **Leadership and Teamwork:** Workshops on leadership styles, team dynamics, and collaborative decision-making to promote effective teamwork of Elected Members.
- **Effective Communication:** Workshops or courses to enhance communication skills, including public speaking, negotiation, conflict resolution techniques and effective stakeholder engagement.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Providing training on building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders, including community members and businesses.

The W.A. Local Government Association (WALGA) produce an annual Training Calendar. It is recommended these bespoke local government courses are accessed by Elected Members as required.

Training can be delivered face to face (F2F) at WALGA, via eLearning (eL) or face to face in-house at the City of Cockburn for all of Council.

### Actions:

1. WALGA courses recommended to Elected Members are:
  - a. Effective Community Leadership
  - b. Strategic Decision Making
  - c. Strategic Policy Development
  - d. Oversee Asset Management Strategy

- e. Dealing with Conflict
- f. Planning Practices - Essentials
- g. Economic Development Essentials for Elected Members
- h. Speaking Professionally as an Elected Member
- i. Procurement in Local Government - The Basics (eL)
- j. Emergency Management Fundamentals (eL)
- k. Introduction to Planning (eL)

2. Some courses are delivered to Elected Members face to face and in-house to facilitate collective understanding of process and knowledge. Examples would include:

- a. CEO Recruitment
- b. CEO Performance Review
- c. Annual *mock meeting* to work through any issues that continue to arise in meetings of Council but can be addressed in a relaxed and collegiate environment.

## 5. Collaboration and Networking

Key focus areas for collaboration and networking are:

- **Continued Learning:** Promoting a culture of continuous learning by providing access to online courses, webinars, and resources to support Elected Members in expanding their knowledge and skills in areas of interest.
- **Evaluation and Feedback:** Implementing a process for regular performance evaluations and feedback sessions to help Elected Members identify areas for improvement and set goals for their ongoing development.
- **Conferences and Workshops:** Encouraging Elected Members to attend relevant conferences, workshops, and seminars to gain exposure to best practices, learn from other jurisdictions, and network with peers.
- **Intergovernmental Collaboration:** Facilitating opportunities for Elected Members to engage with counterparts from other local governments, regional bodies, or national associations to share knowledge and collaborate on common issues.
- **Mentoring and Peer Support:** Facilitating mentoring relationships and peer support networks among Elected Members to foster knowledge sharing and professional growth.

### Actions:

1. Elected Members participate in the *Life Styles Inventory*<sup>™</sup> (LSI). This is an organisational tool that uses both self-assessment and peer feedback to identify individual, thinking, and behavioural styles. It provides insights into strengths and areas for development.
2. It is recommended that all Elected Members participate in a skills and experience analysis to understand the collective base in the context of the perceived needs of the City. This information can be used to:
  - a. Better inform Individual Development Plans for Elected Members
  - b. Define the skills and experience of Elected Members required to meet the City's needs.
3. Council undertakes a biennial review and evaluation of its own effectiveness.
4. Elected Members can join any of the Standing Committees of Council and can represent the Council on City of Cockburn Reference Groups. There are also External Groups at which Elected Members can represent the City of Cockburn. Appointment to these is made as a decision of Council following an Election cycle.

5. There are many avenues that provide information for Elected Members on conferences and workshops, intergovernmental collaboration, and opportunities for meeting other Elected Members. It can be helpful to follow these bodies on social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn. A few are listed for information:
  - a. WALGA
  - b. Local Government Professionals
  - c. Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
  - d. Media statements from the WA Government
  - e. The Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) WA

## 6. Personal Development

- **Individual Development Plans:** Encouraging Elected Members to create individual development plans that align with their personal interests and professional goals, with support from local government administration.

### Action:

1. A template is provided for Elected Members to create their Individual Development Plans (see Attachment 1).

## 7. Timeline and Ownership

Focus Area	Training	Timeframe	Division Responsible
Mandatory Training	Council Member Essentials	Within 12 months of Election	Governance and Strategy
Mandatory Training	Certify Code of Conduct	Quarter 2 of Financial Year (includes new Elected Members)	Governance and Strategy
Mandatory Training	Risk Management	Quarter 2 of Financial Year (includes new Elected Members)	Governance and Strategy
Mandatory Training	Record keeping awareness for Elected Members	Year one of term	Governance and Strategy

Focus Area	Training	Timeframe	Division Responsible
Mandatory Training	Induction	First week post-Election	Governance and Strategy
Mandatory Training	Capital Projects and significant locations - tour	Quarter 2 of Financial Year (includes new Elected Members)	Operations
Recommended Training	As requested, or required (e.g., CEO performance)	N/A	Governance and Strategy
Recommended Training	Annual mock meeting	Quarter 3 of Financial Year	Governance and Strategy
Collaboration and Networking	<i>Life Styles Inventory™</i>	Quarter 3 of FY24, then incoming Elected Members there after	Governance and Strategy
Collaboration and Networking	Skills and experience analysis	Quarter 3 of FY24, then incoming Elected Members there after	Governance and Strategy
Collaboration and Networking	Biennial review and evaluation	Next October 2024	Governance and Strategy

## 8. Budget

Focus Area	Amount
Mandatory Training	Provided for in Elected Member Continuing Professional Development Policy (11304587) and relevant administrative budgets
Recommended Training	Provided for in Elected Member Continuing Professional Development Policy (11304587) and relevant administrative budgets
Collaboration and Networking	Provided for in Elected Member Continuing Professional Development Policy (11304587) Additional budget required for the <i>Life Styles Inventory™</i> (LSI), the skills and experience analysis and the review and evaluation of the effectiveness of Council
Personal Development	Provided for in Elected Member Continuing Professional Development Policy (11304587)

# Attachment 1

## Individual Development Plan (IDP)

An individual development plan is unique to everyone, with the flexibility to tailor it to specific circumstances and aspirations. It is a dynamic tool that helps guide growth, self-improvement, and achievement of personal and professional goals.

<b>Elected Member</b>		
<b>Date</b>		
<b>PDP Components</b>		<b>Notes</b>
<b>Self-Assessment</b>	Begin by assessing your current skills, knowledge, strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Reflect on your values, interests, and aspirations to gain clarity on your professional goals.	
<b>Goal Setting</b>	Establish specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals that align with your aspirations. These goals should be challenging yet attainable and should cover various aspects of your life, including career, education, personal growth, or any other areas of importance to you.	
<b>Action Plan</b>	Break down your goals into actionable steps or milestones. Determine the resources, support, and activities required to achieve each goal. Set deadlines and create a timeline to track your progress.	

<b>Skill Development</b>	<p>Identify the skills and knowledge necessary to reach your goals. Determine the training programs, workshops, courses, or self-study methods that can help you acquire or enhance those skills. Seek opportunities to practice and apply these skills in real-life scenarios.</p>	
<b>Networking and Mentoring</b>	<p>Build a network of professionals in your field or areas of interest. Attend conferences, seminars, or industry events to meet like-minded individuals and expand your connections. Seek out mentors who can provide guidance, support, and valuable insights based on their experience.</p>	
<b>Continuous Learning</b>	<p>Cultivate a mindset of lifelong learning. Stay updated with industry trends, advancements, and best practices through reading, research, and staying engaged with relevant resources. Explore online courses, webinars, podcasts, or workshops to broaden your knowledge base.</p>	
<b>Reflection and Evaluation</b>	<p>Regularly reflect on your progress and evaluate your achievements against the set goals. Assess the effectiveness of your action plan and adjust as needed. Celebrate successes and learn from setbacks or challenges to refine your approach.</p>	
<b>Accountability</b>	<p>Hold yourself accountable for your personal development by tracking your progress, maintaining records of completed activities, and</p>	

	regularly reviewing your plan. Share your goals and progress with a trusted friend, colleague, or mentor who can provide support and hold you accountable.	
<b>Review and Update</b>	Review and update your individual development plan periodically, adjusting goals and action steps as needed. As you achieve goals or new aspirations emerge, modify your plan to reflect your evolving needs and priorities.	
<b>Cost Implications</b>		
<b>Endorsement</b>	As per policy	

## Conducting a Self-Assessment

- **Skills:** Evaluate the skills you possess in various areas, such as technical skills (e.g., software proficiency, data analysis), soft skills (e.g., communication, leadership, problem-solving), and specific domain-related skills (e.g., project management, financial analysis).
- **Knowledge:** Assess your knowledge base in your field or areas of interest. Consider your educational background, industry-specific knowledge, understanding of current trends, regulations, and best practices.
- **Strengths:** Identify your strengths by reflecting on activities or tasks in which you excel. These can include personal qualities (e.g., adaptability, creativity, resilience) or specific skills and knowledge that you excel at compared to others.
- **Weaknesses:** Recognise areas where you may have limitations or room for improvement. These can be skills, knowledge gaps, or personal traits that hinder your effectiveness or growth potential.
- **Areas for Improvement:** Determine areas where you want to enhance your skills, knowledge, or personal attributes. These can be related to career advancement, addressing weaknesses, pursuing new opportunities, or expanding your expertise in a particular domain.

To perform a self-assessment effectively, you can utilise various strategies, such as:

- Reflecting on past experiences, projects, and feedback received from others.



- Seeking input from colleagues, supervisors, mentors, or trusted individuals who can provide objective insights about your skills and areas for improvement.
- Engaging in self-reflection and introspection to identify personal strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations.
- Conducting self-assessment tools or surveys that can help identify your strengths, preferences, and areas for development.

## Setting SMART Goals

SMART goals are a framework for setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound objectives. Here's an outline for creating SMART goals:

- **Specific:** Develop effective communication skills to enhance community engagement.
  - Example: Conduct media training workshops to improve public speaking and media relations skills, resulting in delivering clear and impactful messages during public appearances and media interactions.
- **Measurable:** Increase citizen participation in local government decision-making processes.
  - Example: Increase the number of attendees at Community Meetings by 25% within the next six months, as measured by sign-in sheets or registration records.
- **Achievable:** Enhance knowledge of environmental sustainability practices to promote green initiatives within the local community.
  - Example: Complete a comprehensive training program on sustainable development and identify at least three actionable environmentally friendly initiatives that can be implemented within the municipality within the next year.
- **Relevant:** Improve understanding of budgeting and financial management to make informed fiscal decisions.
  - Example: Attend a financial management workshop and successfully create a budget proposal for a local government project that demonstrates a clear understanding of revenue sources, cost allocations, and financial implications.
- **Time-bound:** Strengthen leadership and collaboration skills to effectively chair and lead local government committees.
  - Example: Complete a leadership development program within six months to enhance facilitation, conflict resolution, and decision-making skills required to lead committee meetings and foster productive collaboration among committee members.

# Action Plan - template

Action Plan					
Goal	Milestones	Resources	Support	Activities	Deadline
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					

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