

Title	Attendance at Conferences, Seminars, Events & Training
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Policy Type

Council

Policy Purpose

This policy provides the guiding principles for attendance of Elected Members and staff at conferences, seminars and training.

Attendance by Elected Members and staff at conferences, seminars and training is supported provided the activity is relevant to Council business and within budget.

Specified training for newly Elected Members is mandatory, following amendments to the Local Government Act, 1995 (The Act) in October 2019.

A Policy related to the attendance at specified events by Elected Members and the Chief Executive Officer is also required, as a result of a new provision related to this matter being included in the Act.

Policy Statement

(1) Elected Members

Elected Members will receive an annual allocation for the purpose of attending conferences, seminars and training relevant to their role as an Elected Member. This will be administratively equally allocated to each Elected Member as part of the overall budget allocation except for the Mayor's allocation which will allow for attendance at two interstate conferences.

The allocation will operate from November to October, in line with local government elections. Residual funds for individual Elected Members from year one will carry over each year to a maximum of two years allowance, after which all unspent funds will be returned to the Municipal Fund when a fresh allocation will be made to Elected Members following the elections.

Multiple Elected Members may attend conferences at the same time, provided that such attendance does not unduly interfere with the business of Council (i.e. conflicts with a Council or Committee Meeting which may affect a quorum).

Where an Elected Member has insufficient funds in their allocation, another Elected Member may agree to meet the costs from their own allocation. Both Elected Members are to advise the CEO in writing if this is to occur.

Where an Elected Member is no longer able to attend the booked conference, seminar or training, the CEO in consultation with the Mayor, may substitute another Elected Member if appropriate.

Title	Attendance at Conferences, Seminars, Events & Training
-------	---



All registrations are to be done through Civic Support.

The cost of training that is specifically arranged for attendance by all Elected Members, (eg governance) shall be paid from a separate allocation not considered part of any individual allocation.

A Report on the activities and presentations made at the Conference shall be forwarded by the delegate to the CEO within one month after the event. Following review, the Report shall be located on the elected Members Hub for information.

(2) Training

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

The course titled 'Council Member Essentials' that:

- (a) consists of the following modules—
 - (i) Understanding Local Government
 - (ii) Serving on Council
 - (iii) Meeting Procedures
 - (iv) Conflicts of Interest
 - (v) Understanding Financial Reports and Budgets; and
- (b) is provided by any of the following bodies---
 - (i) North Metropolitan TAFE
 - (ii) South Metropolitan TAFE; or
 - (iii) WA Local Government Association (WALGA)

Any other training opportunities that elected members may wish to attend are required to be submitted to the CEO for prior assessment and determination. The CEO will consider each application on the basis that the training is relevant to the role and responsibilities of an elected member.

At the conclusion of each financial year, a report on the training completed by Elected Members is to be compiled and displayed on the City's website.

(3) Events

The City of Cockburn will allow Elected Members to accept invitations, including tickets, from third parties to attend events falling into the following categories:

- (a) Concerts;
- (b) Conferences;
- (c) Functions; and
- (d) Sporting Events

Where an invitation, including tickets, is extended to a specified elected member or members, the relevant individual elected member is able to accept or decline, the invitation in their own right.

Title	Attendance at Conferences, Seminars, Events & Training
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If an elected member is unable, or does not wish, to attend the event to which the invitation relates, the member is to advise the event organiser of their unavailability, or may distribute it to another elected member of their choosing, if the event organiser agrees. Otherwise, it is at the sole discretion of the event organiser, whether the invitation, or tickets, can be redistributed to another elected member of the City of Cockburn.

Where an invitation to attend an event, including tickets, is extended to the City of Cockburn and is addressed to the Mayor, the Mayor will have the right to accept the invitation, or to offer the invitation to the Deputy Mayor in the first instance. If the Deputy Mayor declines the invitation, the Mayor may offer the invitation to another Councillor of their choosing.

Where an invitation to attend an event, including tickets, is received by the Mayor and is extended to multiple unspecified elected members, the Mayor will have the right to distribute the invitation, including tickets, to Councillors of their choosing.

Where an Elected Member attends any ticketed function in accordance with this Policy, the value of the ticket is to be declared and entered in the City's Gift Register.

This Policy does not apply to events organised by the City of Cockburn which involve any form of refreshment or entertainment provided by the City and to which there is an expectation that elected members (including spouse) will be invited to attend.

(4) Staff

1. Conferences and Seminars

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) may endorse the recommendation of Directors and Executive Manager, Strategy and Civic Support in respect of staff attendance at conferences and seminars, subject to expenditure being contained within the budget.

Registrations for interstate or overseas conferences, seminars and training are to be done through Executive Support.

A Report on the activities and presentations made at the Conference shall be forwarded by the delegate to the CEO within one month after the event. Following review, the Report shall be located on the Elected Members Hub for Information.

2. Events

The City of Cockburn will allow the CEO to accept invitations, including tickets, addressed to either the CEO specifically, or the City of Cockburn, from third parties to attend events falling into the following categories –

- (a) Concerts;
- (b) Conferences;
- (c) Functions; and
- (d) Sporting Events

Title	Attendance at Conferences, Seminars, Events & Training
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If the CEO is unable, or does not wish, to attend the event to which the invitation relates, the CEO is to advise the event organiser of their unavailability, or may distribute it to another staff member of their choosing, if the event organiser agrees. Otherwise, it is at the sole discretion of the event organiser, whether the invitation, or tickets, can be redistributed to another staff member of the City of Cockburn.

Where multiple invitations, including tickets, are received by the CEO to attend an event, the CEO will have the right to distribute the invitation, including tickets, to staff members of their choosing.

(5) Expenses

Expenses to be met by Council for Elected Members and staff are:

1. Interstate and Overseas

- (a) Registration Fees (including conference dinner and official delegate tours).
- (b) Accommodation costs.
- (c) All reasonable expenses for example, meals and refreshments, laundry and dry cleaning and fares relevant to the conference, seminar or training.
- (d) Economy return air fare (allowing flexibility for preferred travel arrangements).
- (e) Business Class travel for flights longer than six hours duration leaving Australia.

2. State

- (a) Registration Fees (including conference dinner and official delegate tours).
- (b) Accommodation costs.
- (c) All reasonable expenses for example meals and refreshments, laundry and dry cleaning and fares relevant to the conference, seminar or training.
- (d) If applicable, economy return airfare (allowing flexibility for preferred travel arrangements).

3. Conference expenses for accompanying Partner

- (a) Conference or main function meal only.

Reimbursements for relevant expenditure not initially paid by the City may be made on the basis of receipts provided.

(6) Insurance

Those attending conferences, seminars and training are insured for travel to and from the activity (from home or office). All airline tickets purchased are also insured.

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