

Shire of Wiluna Policy Manual

ELECTED MEMBER ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Policy 1.30

Policy Objective

To ensure equitable access to ongoing professional development and training opportunities to enable elected members to fulfil their function and perform the duties required of them under the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Policy Application

This policy is intended to apply to elected members' opportunities to participate in training courses, seminars, workshops etc which have a substantial training or educational component.

Although many conferences and conventions also have an educational and/or training component, this policy is not intended to be applied to events such as the annual WA Local Government Convention ("Local Government Week") or the National General Assembly of Local Government as such conferences are covered by Policy no. 1.29 – Attendance at Events.

Policy Statement

In recognition of the complexity and demands on elected members in undertaking their role, the Shire is committed to resourcing elected members to participate in appropriate training and professional development programs that may enhance and improve the skills necessary to perform their role and function as Councillors.

To ensure each elected member is provided with reasonable opportunities to participate in required, as well as ongoing, professional development, a budget provision will be included annually for each elected member for planning purposes to meet the costs of course fees, travel and accommodation for elected member professional development.

Professional development may include (but is not limited to):

- Mandatory elected member training as specified within regulation 35 of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996;
- Any training recommended by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries in a Report on an Inquiry into the Shire of Wiluna and authorised by the Director-General of that Department;
- Councillor Inductions Programs;
- West Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) elected member training and development courses;
- Other Local government-specific training courses, workshops and forums, relating to such things as understanding the roles/responsibilities of elected members, meeting procedures, etc.
- Other training relating to the role of elected members, such as (but not limited to):
 - General governance training (e.g. from the Australian Institute of Company Directors).

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- Asset management at the Board level
- Media training
- Financial training
- Economics training
- Team building and interpersonal skills

Modes of Delivery

The modes of delivery of training and professional development opportunities shall include (in order of preference):

1. Face-to-face training courses, seminars and workshops delivered in Wiluna. The advantages of this method are:
 - Least disruptive to elected members' lives as they don't have to spend days travelling to distant locations;
 - It provides the opportunity for elected members to "learn as a team" (and the team may or may not also include Shire officers);
 - It is generally cheaper to bring the training to Wiluna than to send elected members to some distant location, so the budget for elected member professional development will go further.
2. Face-to-face training courses, seminars and workshops delivered in a neighbouring local government. The advantages of this method are:
 - Less travelling involved than going to, say, Perth or Sydney.
 - It provides an opportunity to participate with colleagues in the region.
 - It helps the host local governments with the costs of professional development for its elected members while generally being cheaper for the Shire of Wiluna (because of reduced travel costs) than sending people to distant locations.
3. Online training courses. These don't suit everyone, but for some people, they are an excellent way of gaining skills and knowledge (or even a qualification) in their own timeframe, without the need to travel. The advantages of this method are:
 - No travel required.
 - Participants can do the course during whatever hours best suit their schedules.
 - Participants can do the course at their own pace (within limits).
 - Online courses usually contain a wide range of media components, scenarios and narrative elements to help ensure that no matter if the participants are visual, auditory or reading/writing learners, they can learn effectively and with enjoyment.
 - Course fees are usually quite modest and, of course, there are no travel or accommodation costs.
4. Face-to-face training courses, seminars and workshops delivered in Perth, interstate, overseas or other distant locations. These courses have the highest cost in terms of time (for travel) and money but are sometimes the best (or only) option for particular courses that are only of interest to a small minority of elected members, and costs can be reduced if the courses are in close time proximity to some other event that the elected member(s) will be attending (e.g. WALGA courses immediately before or immediately after the WA Local Government Convention).

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Pre-authorised Training and Professional Development Events

The following training and professional events are deemed to be authorised by this policy and require no further approval:

Description	Mode of Delivery	Shire's contribution to costs	Comments/Limitations
All elected member training and professional development events organised by the CEO for face-to-face delivery in Wiluna	Face-to-face delivery in Wiluna.	Not applicable.	
<i>Council Member Essentials</i> modules as mandated by reg. 35 of the Local Govt (Admin) Regs	Face-to-face delivery in Wiluna Or Face-to-face delivery in a neighbouring local government Or Online eLearning Or Face-to-face delivery in Perth	Course fees only unless undertaken as face-to-face training outside Wiluna, in which case the Shire will pay for any applicable fees, travel, meals and accommodation.	The modules which comprise the Council Member Essentials training are subject to an assessment (i.e. a test) which must be passed in order to comply with the regulation.
Training recommended in a report of an Inquiry into the Shire of Wiluna and approved by the Director-General of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries	Face-to-face delivery in Wiluna Or Face-to-face delivery in a neighbouring local government Or Online eLearning Or Face-to-face delivery in Perth	Course fees only unless undertaken as face-to-face training outside Wiluna, in which case the Shire will pay for any applicable fees, travel, meals and accommodation.	
Other WALGA courses that are core or elective modules of the Diploma of Local Government	Face-to-face delivery in Wiluna Or Face-to-face delivery in a neighbouring local government Or Online eLearning Or Face-to-face delivery in Perth	Course fees only unless undertaken as face-to-face training outside Wiluna, in which case the Shire will pay for any applicable fees, travel, meals and accommodation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to an adequate remaining budgetary provision. • A training record, including proof of attendance and statement of attainment, is required to be kept on the Shire's record management system

Approval of Participation

If participation by elected member(s) in a particular training or professional development opportunity (other than those that are pre-authorised by this policy) is considered in the best interest of the Shire, and where appropriate budget provision remains to facilitate attendance, the CEO will prepare details for the council to consider

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for the relevant member(s) participation in the event as detailed within the 'Approval of Participation' sections of this policy.

Approval of Participation – General

The CEO will prepare an agenda item for the council to consider, relating to participation in the particular training or professional development opportunity, detailing the following information:

- Who is paying for the training or professional development opportunity or event (the Shire, the organiser of the event or a third party);
- The location of the training or professional development opportunity in relation to the local government (within the district or out of the district);
- The mode of delivery of the training or professional development opportunity;
- The role of the council member when participating in the training or professional development opportunity (e.g. participant, observer, presenter);
- Whether the training or professional development opportunity is sponsored by the local government;
- The benefit to the district of participation in the training or professional development opportunity;
- Which elected member(s) should be authorised to participate in the training or professional development opportunity; and
- The costs associated with participation in the training or professional development opportunity and the availability of funding within the adopted annual budget.

Approval of Attendance – Short Notice

Where the timing of receipt of an invitation to participate in a training or professional development event does not provide an opportunity for the council to consider attendance at the event (such as when received at short notice), the CEO shall:

- a) Prepare an agenda item in accordance with 'Approval of Attendance – General' and circulate to the council via email;
- b) Email correspondence is to set a reasonable period of notice for elected members to respond (not less than 24 hours);
- c) If no objections are raised within the set notice period by an elected member to the CEO, it will be taken by the CEO the elected member agrees with the recommendation;
- d) The decision whether or not to attend the training or professional development event at short notice will be made once a simple majority of all elected members has responded one way or the other; and
- e) The decision is to be presented for noting at the next ordinary meeting of the council.

The council may also delegate participation in a training or professional development opportunity another council member (i.e. substitution of one participant for another) after a decision has been made, by a circular email from the CEO explaining the proposed change. The subsequent process shall be as described at (b), (c) and (d) above.

Payments in Respect of Participation

For participation in a training or professional development opportunity that is provided without charge, the local government may contribute to appropriate expenses for attendance, such as travel and accommodation, for events outside the district.

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If the council determines that a council member should participate in a training or professional development opportunity, the local government will pay the cost of the registration fees, course fees, assessment fees (as applicable) and appropriate expenses, such as travel, meals and accommodation for events outside the district, and the cost of the registration fees, course fees, and/or assessment fees (as applicable) for opportunities and events within the district.

Any additional costs attributable to the partner or family member of an elected member will not be paid for by the Shire of Wiluna.

Study Tours

A study tour is designed to enable elected members (and staff) to travel intrastate, interstate and/or overseas to research and study specific issues relevant to the Council.

Details of study tours are to be arranged in advance so that suitable provision can be included in each year's budget. When no details of study tours have been arranged, or arrangements are incomplete, an appropriate amount may be included in the budget to cover the cost of an annual study tour.

Study tours will be considered with the following guidelines:

- The maximum attendance at any study tour is to be two Elected Members (and two staff);
- Attendance at a study tour shall only take place where there are appropriate funds provided in the annual budget; and
- A detailed report including recommendations on each study tour is to be submitted to Council for noting.

Booking Arrangements

Registration, travel and accommodation for elected members will be arranged through the administration office. In general, all costs including airfares, registration fees, and accommodation will be paid directly by the Shire.

Travel to Events Outside the District

Where travel by road is required, the Chief Executive Officer will (subject to availability) make a Shire of Wiluna vehicle available.

Representatives who use their own motor vehicles to travel to events approved under this policy are to be reimbursed at the appropriate rate per kilometre as set out in Section 30.6 of the *Local Governments Officers' (Western Australia) Interim Award 2011* as at the date of the most recent determination of the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal for Local Government Chief Executive Officers and Elected Members.

Extent of Expenses to be Reimbursed

Expenses incurred in relation to participation in approved training and professional development opportunities (in addition to booking arrangements paid by the Shire) may be reimbursed to elected members as set by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal through a determination published in the *Government Gazette* from time to time.

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Elected members will generally not be reimbursed for the cost of travel, meals or refreshments for other people (such as family members who accompany them to training or professional development events outside the Wiluna district).

Expenses will generally be reimbursed from the time an elected member leaves home to attend an event to the time the elected member returns home. Should an elected member extend a visit by leaving prior to the time necessary to arrive for the event or return after the time at which the elected member could have returned following the event, reimbursements will be paid:

- for the days of the professional development event only; and
- for the cost of travel to and from the airport to the accommodation to be used for the professional development event.

Where a visit is extended, as discussed above, an elected member may stay for the period of the extension in different accommodation to that used for the attendance at the training or professional development event. In such situations, the reimbursement of taxi fares will be to the estimated cost of travel between the professional development event's accommodation and the airport.

Expenses without receipts will not be reimbursed.

Payment of Expense Reimbursements

The extent to which an elected member can be reimbursed for intrastate and interstate travel and accommodation costs incurred in any of the circumstances referred to in regulation 32(1) of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* is set by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal through a determination published in the Government Gazette from time to time.

Nothing prevents an elected member from being reimbursed for any reasonable expense incurred whilst attending professional development events where an elected member produces receipt or other sufficient information for the total cost to support their claim.

Reasonable expenses may include but are not limited to:

- Meals and non-alcoholic beverages for the elected member only;
- Transport travel – taxi, Uber or public transport; and
- Entry fees.

Cash Advances

The Shire will not pay cash advances to elected members.

Elected Member Accompanying Person

Where an elected member is accompanied at a professional development event, all costs for or incurred by the accompanying person, including, but not limited to, travel, breakfast, meals, registration and/or participation in any event programs, are to be borne by the elected member/accompanying person and not by the Shire.

Where the Shire meets an account containing any expenditure or cost incurred on behalf of an accompanying person attending, such expenditure must be repaid to the

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Shire by the elected member/accompanying person within 30 days of being invoiced for such expenditure following the conclusion of the professional development event.

Attendance at Overseas Training Courses or Professional Development Opportunities

An elected member may, with prior Council approval, attend an overseas training course or professional development opportunity. The Council approval must include a specific Council resolution indicating how the attendance at such an overseas event will be of benefit to the Shire and the elected member and detailing any conditions applied.

Report

Upon return from any professional development event as detailed within this policy, where registration and other associated costs are met by the Shire, the attending elected member is required to provide a written report on their attendance and the benefits to them and the Shire, to the CEO. The CEO is to record these reports in a register to support the required annual reporting required by legislation.

Amendments

Amendments to this policy require a simple majority decision of the council.

Document Control	
Responsible Directorate	Office of the CEO
Relevant Section	Governance
Legislative Requirement	S5.128 Local Government Act 1995
Council Meeting Held & Adopted, Resolution #	26 Feb 2020 Res # 016/20
Amendments, Date & Resolution #	
Review Dates & Resolution #	
Next Review Date	November 2021