



**CORANGAMITE  
SHIRE**

# **Support for Councillor Professional Development**

**Corangamite Shire**

December 2016

# Council Policy



## Support for Councillor Professional Development

### Introduction

Councillors are regularly requested or required to undertake professional development to provide them with the networks, skills and training to undertake their role as Councillors.

Corangamite Shire Council strives to seek a balance between the appropriate expenditure of public funds, while at the same time ensuring that the community is represented by well-informed, highly skilled Councillors<sup>1</sup>.

### Purpose

This policy provides guidelines for the payment of costs incurred by Councillors related to professional development in their official capacity.

### Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors representing the Corangamite Shire Council and applies from the date adopted.

The policy should be used by:

- a) Individual Councillors when considering professional development opportunities.
- b) Council when considering requests to Council for the payment of costs associated with professional development.
- c) Finance and other related staff in implementing payments for professional development activities.

### Definitions

In this policy:

**Expenditure** means funds paid in support of an activity

**Professional Development** includes short courses, conferences, seminars, forums, training, trade delegations and friendship visits that will assist a Councillor in their broad civic leadership role, in addition to undergraduate and post-graduate studies that is beneficial to both Council and a Councillor's performance of their role.

### References

*Local Government Act 1989*  
Corangamite Shire Councillor Code of Conduct  
Councillor Expenses Policy

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<sup>1</sup> *Local Government Act 1989*, s.3D

## **Policy Detail**

### Events, conferences and seminars

Events, conferences and seminars provide an opportunity for Councillors to receive information on topics related to local government. These may include both government and commercial activities. Some examples of these include the ALGA National General Assembly and National Roads Congress and the MAV State Conference

### Professional development activities

Professional development activities undertaken by individual Councillors include formal accredited and non-accredited training related to Councillors' role. Requests for professional development support must have a direct relationship to the Councillors' role, and training provided with this focus will be prioritised.

The Local Government sector – through government, peak bodies and partnerships with the higher education and professional sectors – has taken a proactive role in providing significant opportunities for training to Councillors. An example of accredited training provided directly for the Local Government sector is the MAV/Swinburne Graduate Diploma in Management, which is tailored to the needs of the local government sector.

### Other events

On some occasions, there may be opportunities presented for Councillors to attend trade delegations, industry investigations or other types of activities aimed at increasing the profile of Corangamite Shire<sup>2</sup>. These activities should be assessed in accordance with the assessment principles.

### Internal training opportunities

Where Councillors believe that a significant training or professional development need is identified which is not addressed by publicly available training and development options, internal training and development may be sourced and provided. Examples of this type of training may include familiarisation with Council activities or procedures, or legislative amendments. In this instance, Councillors should contact the Chief Executive Officer to discuss the specific training need so that training can be sourced and delivered.

### Councillor Induction Program

Separate to professional development opportunities for Councillors, the Chief Executive Officer will determine an induction program for all Councillors, conducted every four years after the election of a new Council.

### What constitutes approved expenditure?

Approved expenditure under this policy includes:

- Conference or training registration fees,
- Travel costs, including road travel, flights, public transport or taxis, and car parking fees
- Accommodation and meals, but not alcohol, directly related to the event, including accommodation from the day prior to the event.

Other types of reimbursement (e.g. respite carer payments) may be made available under Councils' *Councillor Expenses Policy*).

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<sup>2</sup> It is important that any gifts – including travel and accommodation provided at lower or no cost– are appropriately recorded in the Councils' Gift Register.

Where a Councillor's partner accompanies a Councillor to a conference, the registration, accommodation and travel arrangements may be organised by Council, with the Councillor to pay the additional costs incurred by Council due to the partner's attendance, including registration fees, travel expenses, meals and accommodation.

#### Procedure for approval

The following process will be strictly observed when assessing requests for expenditure for Councillor professional development.

#### *Approval by CEO*

The Chief Executive Officer will approve Councillor professional development expenses where it is calculated that the total amount of expenditure on a single professional development opportunity will not exceed \$2000 per Councillor. This assessment will be undertaken using the assessment principles contained in this policy.

#### *Approval by Council resolution*

In the event that the proposed expenditure on a single professional development opportunity exceeds \$2000 per Councillor, the expenditure must be approved by a decision of Council. This approval must be subject to the assessment principles contained within this policy.

#### Assessment principles

All expenditure by Council on Councillor attendance at any type of professional development activity should be assessed against the following criteria:

#### *Applicability of content to current or future likely future Council issues*

1. Does the event provide an opportunity to receive or upgrade relevant and necessary training, directly related to the Councillors' role?
2. Does the event provide an opportunity to learn key information about an issue of public policy related to the Corangamite community?
3. Does the event have the potential to foster broad economic development opportunities within Corangamite Shire?
4. Does the event provide an opportunity for councillor(s) to build their networks both within and across sectors, in a way which will be of benefit to the Corangamite community?

#### Available funds

The annual budget for Councillors' training will be adequate for Councillors to attend annual conferences plus provision for an annual Councillor Workshop and a sum for other Councillor training needs. This budget item is developed in consultation with Councillors and reflects the need to ensure ongoing professional development, while also ensuring that public funds are expended in a responsible manner.

#### Reporting

Following participation in an event the Councillor is expected to submit a verbal report at the next available Council Briefing detailing:

- Whether the objectives of the participation were met.
- The benefits to the Councillor, Council and the community.
- The value of future attendance by Council at similar events.

A written report to Council by a Councillor may be required following attendance at national events.

**Review Date**

This policy will be reviewed by Council in 2020, or earlier as required by changed circumstances including changes to the legislation and policies of Corangamite Shire, the Victorian Government and its agencies, or Federal Government and its agencies.

It is considered that this Policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the *Charter of Human Rights Act (2006)*.