

POLICY NAME: COUNCILLOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

POLICY REF: C13

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OBJECTIVE

This policy has been established to demonstrate Council's commitment to ensuring Councillors have equal access to training and educational opportunities and have the opportunity to maintain their knowledge and skill base to contemporary standards and expectations.

BACKGROUND

Councillors have or may quickly attain a clear understanding of the system of local government, how their council works and the full range of their roles and responsibilities.

It is equally important that all councillors have continuing opportunities to undertake appropriate skills development and training in areas needed to assist them to carry out their role effectively.

Currently there are no specific legislative requirements pertaining to councillor training or education. However, the Office of Local Government (OLG) strongly encourages councils to develop training programs and encourage continuing development programs to support councillors in their role.

DEFINITIONS

In this Policy the following definitions apply:

Council	Ballina Shire Council
LGA	Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
Reg	Local Government (General) Regulation 2005
Policy	Councillor Training and Development Policy
LGNSW	Local Government NSW
Training	Includes training, development and educational programs / courses / workshops

APPLICATION OF POLICY

This Policy applies to:

- Councillors

This Policy has been prepared with reference to:

- Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy
- Office of Local Government - Councillor Handbook (latest edition October 2017)
- Office of Local Government – Councillor Induction and Professional Development – A guide for councils

As a minimum this Policy should be read in conjunction with Council's:

- Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy

POLICY

Council policy is to facilitate training opportunities for Councillors to increase their levels of knowledge and expertise recognising that this investment will enhance the effectiveness of the Council's performance in achieving its goals.

Training offered to Councillors will be classified as:

- Imperative
- Desirable
- Developmental

Imperative Training

Training is *imperative* when it represents essential knowledge that a Councillor must have to act effectively, ethically and legally in their role, typically as there is a legislative framework on which it is based. Council has identified the following topics as Imperative Training:

- Councillor Induction Program
- Code of Conduct
- Relationship between Councillors, General Manager and Staff and
- Meeting Procedures.

Imperative training will be offered to all Councillors during the first 12 months of the Council term, with the majority of the training provided within the first three months. All Councillors should attend imperative training and the cost of imperative training will not be recorded against any individual Councillor annual allowance for training as per the Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy.

Desirable Training

Training is considered *desirable* when:

- it is important to the role of Councillor and
- it is in the best interest of the Councillor.

It may not be essential for a Councillor to undertake desirable training however the training will help a Councillor more fully understand aspects of their role, along with the various strategic and legislative frameworks in which they operate. This can help improve a Councillor's effectiveness in their role. Council has identified the following topics as Desirable Training:

- Planning Framework
- Chairing and Meeting Procedures
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement
- Financial Skills
- Governance
- Media Skills
- Performance Management for Senior Staff
- Strategic Management

Councillors should attend a majority of the "desirable training" topics at least once every term.

To assist Councillors attend desirable training and to avoid the inconvenience where training programs may not be delivered locally, the General Manager will co-ordinate training programs, for a number of the desirable training topics, within the Ballina Shire local government area, during the Council term, subject to annual budget constraints.

This will typically mean one or two topics are delivered locally per annum.

The cost of this training, where co-ordinated by the General Manager locally, will be classified as corporate training and will not be recorded against any individual Councillor annual allowance of \$5,000 for training, as per the Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy.

Councillors are also encouraged to attend other desirable training opportunities, as they arise, subject to the annual allowance limit.

Developmental Training

Training offered to councillors is considered *developmental* when:

- it is aimed at further developing the skills or professional expertise of the Councillor.

Councillors are encouraged to accept training classified as *developmental*. Such training may include, but not limited to:

- attendance at LGNSW workshops whether public, in house, regional programs, induction seminars,
- seminars and informal sessions conducted by Council with appropriate guest speakers and trainers,
- purchase of training booklets and discussion papers that could be distributed to councillors for information,
- on-line training delivery, and
- mentoring.

Minimum Training Requirements

The minimum requirements for Councillor training are:

- Internal Councillor Induction Sessions
- Corporate Training Programs co-ordinated by Council and delivered locally, as outlined in this policy.

Approval of Training Payment of Expenses

Approval for training and reimbursement for expenses relating to a Councillor's attendance at training will be determined in accordance with Ballina Shire Council's "Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy".

Notification to Councillors

- Every effort will be made by the Mayor and / or General Manager to provide Councillors with as much notice as possible of upcoming training.

- Councillors are encouraged to visit the "learning solutions" section of the Local Government NSW (LGNSW) website (www.lgnsw.org.au) to identify upcoming training programs
- Councillors are encouraged to take advantage of desirable and developmental training opportunities as they arise and attendance can be co-ordinated by contacting the General Manager (or personal assistant), subject to the annual allowance limits.

Recording and Reporting

- The data to be maintained will include:
 - Courses, workshops or information sessions formally made available to councillors
 - Classification of training made available under this policy; and
 - Councillors who have undertaken the training
- Data that is required to be reported to Council by legislation will be reported as per that legislation and published in the Annual Report.
- Data relating to training for Councillors can be made available at any other times, by request to the Mayor or General Manager.

REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed every four years.