

# CP 08 Professional Development for Councillors Policy

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Chief Executive Officer
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## Policy Objective

The policy encourages councillors to avail themselves of opportunities to attend appropriate professional development courses and conferences and seminars which may be of benefit to the individual councillor and/or Council as a whole.

The policy also acknowledges the obligation of councillors to be properly informed on all matters pertaining to the Council and to assist in this education process, councillors are encouraged to attend professional development courses and conferences and seminars with relevance to local government.

## Definitions

- **Professional Development:** Learning to maintain or improve professional credentials such as academic degrees, formal coursework, attending conferences, training, development programs, courses or seminars.
- **Reasonable:** in relation to expenses and costs, means expenses and costs incurred in performing official duties and functions or Council business which, in amount and nature, are consistent with public expectations.
- **Councillor Representative:** Councillor responsible for and appointment to represent a committee, working group, advisory committee, peak industry body and regional and community based committees.

## Procedure

Details of professional development courses and conferences and seminars which may be relevant and of interest to Councillors will be circulated to councillors through the weekly Councillors' Briefing Paper.

Councillors considering undertaking a course or attending a conference or seminar need to receive approval from the Mayor, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer.

Individual professional development expenditure should be tested against the following criteria:

- is it in the interest for the Benalla Rural City Council community
- does it reasonably meet the budget determined by Council
- is it directly relevant to the councillor's role
- is it able to be utilised during the councillor's term of office
- attendance at a conference presents a reputational risk to the Council.

The Chief Executive Office will arrange administration support once attendance is approved by the Mayor.

### **Professional Memberships and Subscriptions**

Council is a member of:

- The Municipal Association of Victoria
- Rural Councils Victoria

### **Councillor Representative**

Council nominates Councillor representatives at its annual general meeting of Council each year. Councillor representatives are appointed to committees, working groups, advisory committees, peak industry bodies and regional and community based committees.

Where a Councillor is attending a conference, seminar or event as an authorised Councillor representative of Council, the Council will:

- pay the registration fees on registration of the Councillor
- reimburse or pay all reasonable expenses for travel, transport, accommodation, meals and other necessary associated out of pocket expenses on production of appropriate tax invoices.

The costs of such authorised attendance are not part of and are additional to the Councillor's Professional Development Allowance.

### **Report to Council**

Following attendance at a conference or seminar councillors will have the opportunity to present either a verbal or written report to at the Council Meeting under the item "Reports by Councillors".

### **Budget Consideration**

The Council's Professional Development Budget allocation will be determined annually by Council as part of its annual budgetary process.

As a guideline, a notional sum of \$2,000 shall be allocated for use by each councillor.

## Expenses Reporting

A quarterly report will be submitted to Council detailing year to date expenditure on councillors' attendance at professional development courses and conferences and seminars.

Details of all interstate and overseas travel will be recorded in Council's Register of Interstate and Overseas Travel which is available for public inspection.

## Review

This policy may be reviewed at any time by the Council to accommodate changes in legislation, regulations, policy gaps, new technology or systems, as well as remain consistent with industry best practice.

## Related Policies

- *Councillor Resources and Reimbursement Policy.*
- *Model Councillor Code of Conduct*
- *Recognition and Support, the Victorian Government's Policy Statement on Local Government Mayoral and Councillor Allowances and Resources.*
- *Information Guide on Mayor and Councillor Entitlements – Reimbursement of Expenses and Provision of Resources and Facilities Support for Victorian Mayors and Councillors.*

## Related Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations*
- *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024*