5.23 Elected Member Continuing Professional Development Policy

Policy Owner	**Governance**
Person Responsible	**Chief Executive Officer**
Date of Adoption	**23 September 2020 – Resolution 020920**
Date of Last Review	**24 September 2026 – Resolution 070926**
Date Next Due for Review	**3 years / or earlier if required**

PURPOSE

This policy is required under section 5.128 of the *Local Government Act 1995* and is intended to provide guidance in relation to the ongoing professional development of Elected Members.

OBJECTIVE

To ensure that Elected Members of the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu (the Shire) understand their obligations as Elected Members, make well informed decisions and effectively represent their constituents, and that the Shire provides support for Elected Members to attend conferences, seminars, training and other professional development opportunities in order to develop and enhance their knowledge pertaining to their role.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Elected Members of the Shire.

DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Act	*Local Government Act 1995.*
CEO	Means the Chief Executive Officer of the Shire.
CPD	Means Continuing Professional Development
Elected Member	Means a Council Member elected to serve on the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu Council.
Professional Development	Means activities that support the ongoing development of knowledge, skills, and professional capability relevant to local government and of interest or benefit to the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu. This may include, but is not limited

	to: • Training courses and workshops • Conferences, conventions, congresses, forums, and information sessions • Study tours and professional events • Formal qualifications delivered by accredited education institutions • Individual units of study • Continuing Professional Development (CPD) memberships and programs Professional development activities must be delivered or facilitated by industry-recognised providers, peak bodies, professional organisations, accredited education institutions, or other reputable training providers.

POLICY

The *Local Government Act 1995* requires all Elected Members to undertake compulsory training within 12 months of being elected. The Shire is required under the *Local Government Act 1995* to adopt and report on compulsory training, and additionally, continuing development for Elected Members of the Shire.

1. Meeting the professional development needs of Elected Members

The Shire will endeavour to address and meet the identified professional development needs of Elected Members.

The options for providing such professional development includes:

1.1 Elected Member Induction

Following each election, the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu will conduct a comprehensive induction program, providing newly Elected Members with information that will support them to understand Elected Member roles and responsibilities; legislative obligations; personal responsibilities; and strategic direction of the Local Government. Continuing/previously Elected Members are encouraged to participate in nominated elements of the induction program, to assist in fostering a team culture and to refresh their understanding.

1.2 Compulsory Elected Member Training

All Elected Members of the Shire have significant and complex roles that require a diverse skillset.

In accordance with section 5.126 of the *Local Government Act 1995* and Regulation 35 of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996,* all Elected Members are to undertake and successfully complete the following prescribed professional development training modules titled "Council Member Essentials" within the period of 12 months from the day the Elected Member was elected, unless a prescribed exemption applies:

- Understanding Local Government;
- Serving on Council;
- Meeting Procedures;
- Conflicts of Interest; and
- Understanding Financial Reports and Budgets.

All modules and associated costs will be paid for by the Shire and completed within the 12 months following election. The training is valid for 5 years.

Pursuant to s.127 of the Act, the Shire will publish, on the Shire's website, training undertaken by all Elected Members within one month after the end of each financial year.

It is Council's preference that the training is undertaken via the eLearning method which is the more cost-efficient form of delivery. It is acknowledged however that there may be Elected Members who prefer to receive training face-to-face and/or opportunities to attend training which is being delivered in the region or in the Perth metropolitan area.

Non-compliance with the requirement to complete training is an offence under the Act punishable by a fine not exceeding $10,000. Elected Members have a responsibility to complete training in accordance with legislation.

1.3 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The professional development of Elected Members is an important activity of the Shire to ensure that its decision making is of the highest standard and is the product of informed and ethical debate by well trained and committed Elected Members acting in the best interest of all of the community.

In accordance with section 5.128 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, Elected Members are encouraged to nominate to attend other conferences or training opportunities to enhance and broaden their knowledge of local government issues to support the community.

1.4 Eligible Professional Development Activities

In order to be eligible for approval under this policy, Continuing Professional Development must be relevant to the role of an Elected Member, and offer demonstratable benefit to the Council as a governing body, the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu as an organisation, and the broader community.

This includes professional development that:

- Enhances the understanding of Elected Member roles and responsibilities, and/or the role and function of Local Government;
- Assists Elected Members to develop knowledge and skills in relation to the strategic objectives of the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu;
- Enables Elected Members to further develop personal and professional skills necessary for excellence in performance of the Elected Member role; or
- Supports Elected Members in developing and maintaining positive and healthy communication, team culture and relationships, to facilitate excellent teamwork to achieve outcomes that deliver good government for the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu community.

Eligible Continuing Professional Development activities include:

- The West Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) and Australian Local Government (ALGA) conferences;
- Conferences of the major professions in Local Government and other institutions of relevance to Local Government activities;
- Accredited training organisations offering training which directly related to the role and responsibilities of Elected Members;
- Information sessions organised by the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety;
- Seminars, training and/or information sessions provided by individuals or organisations with a demonstrably strong knowledge of local government in Western Australia; or
- Conferences, training, workshops or seminars that address the initiatives and projects identified in the Shire's Strategic Community Plan, Corporate Business Plan or other strategic documents.

  Elected Members are encouraged to identify and share relevant Continuing Professional Development opportunities with Council and the CEO. The CEO will also identify and inform Elected Members of relevant opportunities.

2. Accessing and Approval of Professional Development

Request for professional development may be initiated by the Elected Member (or Council as a whole) and must be forwarded to the CEO prior to enrolment or registration.

The CEO will consult with the President in relation to the request to determine that:

- the application is relevant and appropriate and addresses the Elected Member's professional development needs;
- there are enough funds available for all costs likely to be incurred in the Elected Member's proposed professional development; and
- the proposed Elected Member is the most appropriate to undertake the specific professional development.

No Elected Member is permitted to undertake professional development in the last 6 months of his or her term of office, unless approved by Council.

The CEO is authorised to approve requests from Elected Members for professional development based on consultation with the President.

If the CEO and President determine not to approve a request for professional development, the affected Elected Member has the right to put the matter before Council for consideration and final determination.

Considerations for approval of the training or professional development activity include:

- The costs of attendance including registration, travel and accommodation, if required;
- The Budget provisions allowed and the uncommitted or unspent funds remaining;
- Any justification provided by the applicant when the training is submitted for approval;
- The benefits to the Shire of the person attending;
- Identified skills gaps of elected members both individually and as a collective;
- Alignment to the Shire's Strategic Objectives; and
- The number of Shire representatives already approved to attend.

3. Registration, Travel and Expenses

The Shire of Wongan-Ballidu will be responsible for the costs associated with training or professional development approved in accordance with this policy, as detailed in this section.

Registrations and Bookings

The Shire will make all bookings associated with the proposed professional development, including where relevant, airline bookings, accommodation and registration.

Elected Members are not to pay such costs and seek reimbursement, except in the case of an emergency or unique circumstances and subject to the Chief Executive Officer's prior approval.

Registration fees may include, where applicable, event registration, conference program dinners, tours and workshops which accompany the event program.

Travel

Where travel is involved, the actual costs of travel to and from the event venue are to be met by the Shire in accordance with the current WA Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Determination for Local Government CEOs and Elected Members (the Determination).

Travel arrangements are to be by the most cost effective and reasonably convenient mode.

Air travel is to be Economy Class at a time that is convenient to the Elected Member. As far as is practicable, tickets will be purchased well in advance and take advantage of available discount fares.

An Elected Member may seek approval to travel within Western Australia by private motor vehicle and be reimbursed for vehicle costs in accordance with the Determination. Approval may only be granted where the cost is approximately equivalent to the most cost-effective mode of travel.

Meals

Funding for meals and incidental expenses is to be provided in accordance with the Determination.

Accommodation

If the Elected Member requires accommodation, reasonable accommodation will be booked for them for a room at or in close proximity to the event venue and within the expenditure limitations prescribed in the Determination.

Loyalty Program and Reward Points

Elected Members are not to obtain personal benefit from expenditure of the Shire's funds and must not claim personal frequent flyer or accommodation loyalty points for air travel or accommodation paid for by the Shire.

Accompanying Persons

Elected Members are responsible and will be required to pay all costs associated with an accompanying person attending an event (including conference dinners and functions).

Elected Member Reports on CPD Activities

Following attendance at any CPD activity of two (2) days or more duration, the Elected Member(s) that attended shall submit an individual or combined report to the Council and CEO (via email or a Council Forum). The report shall include a summary of the event's proceedings, major points of interest to the Shire, and any recommendations, including whether attendance at similar conferences in the future is warranted.

Reporting and Publishing

The Shire is required to report annually on training undertaken by each Elected Member. Completed training for that financial year is to be published on the Shire's website within one month of the end of the financial year. This is to include the Elected Member Essentials Course and any continuing professional development undertaken by Elected Members.

REVIEW

Reviews of this policy are to be undertaken every three years or earlier if required.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of this policy.