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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Council acknowledges that within its local government area boundaries are the traditional lands of the Wonnarua people, the Awabakal people and the Darkinjung people. We acknowledge these Aboriginal peoples as the traditional custodians of the land on which our offices and operations are located, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now live within the Cessnock Local Government Area.

COUNCIL VALUES

Integrity, Respect, Teamwork, Accountability, and Excellence.

DISCLAIMER

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1 POLICY OBJECTIVES

1.1 The objectives of this policy are to:

- 1.1.1 Ensure Councillors have equal access to training and educational opportunities that give them the opportunity to maintain and develop their knowledge and skill base relevant to contemporary standards and community expectations.
- 1.1.2 Demonstrate Council's commitment in assisting Councillors to develop and maintain the skills and knowledge required to effectively perform their civic role and responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) (**Act**).

2 POLICY SCOPE

2.1 This Policy applies to all Councillor of Cessnock City Council, including the Mayor.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 Council is committed to developing an induction and ongoing professional development program for the Mayor and Councillors to ensure they can fulfil their statutory roles and responsibilities. As part of this program, the Mayor and each Councillor will have a professional development plan that identifies specific gaps in their capabilities (i.e. their knowledge, skills and attributes) and identify professional development activities to build these capabilities.

4 INDUCTION PROGRAM

4.1 Council will develop an induction program for new and returning Councillors as well as a supplementary program for the Mayor to ensure they are provided all the information they need to effectively fulfil their roles in the first few months of Council's term and feel confident in their ability to do so.

4.2 The induction program will cover:

- 4.2.1 An orientation to Council facilities and the local government area
- 4.2.2 An overview of the key issues and tasks for the new Council including Council's Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program Operational Plan, Resourcing Strategy and Community Engagement Plan
- 4.2.3 The legislation, rules, principles and political context under which Councils operate
- 4.2.4 The roles and responsibilities of Councillors and the Mayor
- 4.2.5 Council's organisational structure, Workforce Management Strategy and the roles and responsibilities of the General Manager and Council staff
- 4.2.6 what the council does and how it operates, including an overview of integrated planning and reporting and land-use planning, natural resource management, financial management and asset management by Council
- 4.2.7 key Council policies and procedures Councillors must comply with including the Code of Conduct
- 4.2.8 the role of Council meetings and how to participate effectively in them
- 4.2.9 the support available to the Mayor and Councillors and where they can go to get more information or assistance
- 4.2.10 information on the process for taking the oath of office and electing the Deputy mayor at the first Council meeting.

- 4.3** In the case of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, the program will also cover:
 - 4.3.1 How to be an effective leader of the governing body and the Council
 - 4.3.2 the role of the Chair and how to chair Council meetings
 - 4.3.3 The Mayor's role in integrated planning and reporting
 - 4.3.4 The Mayor's role and responsibilities under the Code of Conduct
 - 4.3.5 the Mayor's role and responsibilities in relation to the General Manager's employment
 - 4.3.6 the Mayor's role at regional and other representative bodies, and
 - 4.3.7 the Mayor's civic and ceremonial role.
- 4.4** The Mayor and Councillors must have a working knowledge and understanding of these areas by the end of the induction program.
- 4.5** The induction program will also include team building activities to help the governing body establish itself as a cohesive and collaborative team focused on a common purpose with shared values and goals.
- 4.6** Activities will aim to ensure Mayors and Councillors:
 - 4.6.1 Identify how they would like to work together as a team and identify a common vision for the governing body
 - 4.6.2 build relationships with each other based on trust and mutual respect that facilitate collaboration
 - 4.6.3 contribute to a positive and ethical culture within the governing body
 - 4.6.4 work towards consensus as members of the governing body for the benefit of the community
 - 4.6.5 develop respectful negotiation skills and manage alternate views within the governing body without damaging relationships
 - 4.6.6 understand what supports or undermines the effective functioning of the governing body
 - 4.6.7 respect the diversity of skills and experiences on the governing body
 - 4.6.8 communicate and uphold the decisions of Council in a respectful way, even if their own position was not adopted.
- 4.7** Activities should also help the Mayor, as the leader of the governing body, to:
 - 4.7.1 act as a stabilising influence and show leadership
 - 4.7.2 promote a culture of integrity and accountability within Council and when representing Council in the community and elsewhere.
- 4.8** The Mayor and Councillors, including those re-elected to office, must attend all induction sessions to ensure the effective and cohesive operation of the governing body.
- 4.9** If a Councillor is unable to attend all induction sessions, Council will arrange attendance at an equivalent session as soon as possible.
- 4.10** Completion of the identified Induction Program, or equivalent sessions, is the minimum mandatory training requirement and must be completed before a Councillor will be approved to undertake further professional development opportunities.
- 4.11** Council will evaluate the Induction Program at the end of each Council term to determine whether it has achieved these outcomes, and to identify and address areas for improvement.

5 ASSESSMENT OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- 5.1 The minimum skills and knowledge required of Councillors to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively are included in the Induction Program.
- 5.2 An assessment will be made of the skills and knowledge each Councillor brings to their role against these minimum requirements to identify any gaps that their Professional Development Plan should address. The assessment will be conducted within the first 6 months of each new term of Council.
- 5.3 To identify any gaps, Council will obtain this information through activities such as self-assessments, questionnaires, Councillor feedback, observations during Council meetings and workshops and interviews.

6 ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

- 6.1 An individual ongoing professional development plan will be developed for the Mayor and each Councillor to address any gaps in the capabilities (i.e. the knowledge, skills and attributes) needed to effectively fulfil their role.
- 6.2 Each professional development plan will span the Council's term, and identify professional development activities that the Mayor or Councillor will participate in. Professional development activities will be prioritised according to need and approved by the General Manager where Council funds are required in accordance with Council's Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy. The Mayor and Councillors are expected to complete all the activities included in their professional development plan.
- 6.3 Professional development activities will, wherever possible, follow the 70/20/10 principle. The 70/20/10 principle requires that:
 - 6.3.1 70% of learning activities are provided via learning and developing from experience – for example, on-the-job training, self-directed learning, developmental roles, problem solving, exposure and practice
 - 6.3.2 20% of learning activities are provided via learning and training through others – for example, personal or professional networks, coaching, mentoring, feedback, memberships and professional associations, and
 - 6.3.3 10% of learning activities are provided via learning and developing through structured programs – for example, training courses, external or in-house workshops, seminars, webinars and other e-learning and briefing sessions conducted by the council, external training providers or industry bodies.
- 6.4 The timing of professional development activities for the Mayor and Councillors will be designed in such a way so as to not overload councillors with learning activities in the early part of Council's term. The timing will reflect what knowledge and skills Councillors and the Mayor need at various points in council's term to undertake their roles. The Mayor and Councillors will be provided with as much notice as possible for upcoming induction and professional development activities.
- 6.5 The plans will include:
 - 6.5.1 the outcome of Council's needs analysis
 - 6.5.2 the knowledge and skills the Councillor or Mayor brings to their roles
 - 6.5.3 any development needs of each Councillor or Mayor and the priority given to each development need
 - 6.5.4 how the knowledge or skill will be developed (i.e. on-the-job training, mentoring, internal training, external training, briefing session etc.)
 - 6.5.5 operational information such as timeframes for development, who is responsible for

organising training/development, approval processes and estimated costs.

- 6.6** Training activities will be designed appropriate to the identified need and may include:
- 6.6.1 in-house workshops and briefing sessions conducted by the council with appropriate staff, trainers and guest speakers
 - 6.6.2 attendance at external training courses and events, for example, seminars, conferences and workshops
 - 6.6.3 practical on-the-job training
 - 6.6.4 printed materials such as training booklets, mentoring and/or online training resources.
- 6.7** The Professional Development Plans are to be developed in consultation with the Mayor, each individual Councillor, and the General Manager. Training activities will be provided within budgetary constraints and in accordance with Council's Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy.

7 RESPONSIBILITIES

Mayor/Councillors

- 7.1** The Mayor and each Councillor are responsible for making themselves available to attend any development activities identified in the professional development plan. The Mayor and all Councillors must make all reasonable endeavours to attend and participate in the induction sessions and professional development activities arranged for them during the term of the council.

General Manager

- 7.2** The General Manager has overall responsibility for Council's Induction and Professional Development Program.

Public Officer

- 7.3** The Public Officer is responsible for planning, scheduling and facilitating induction and professional development sessions for the Mayor and Councillors in consultation with the General Manager.
- 7.4** The Public Officer will maintain data pertaining to Councillor induction and professional development activities and attendance.

Records management

- 7.5** Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this policy in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy.

8 BUDGET

- 8.1** An annual budget allocation will be provided to support the induction and professional development activities undertaken by the Mayor and Councillors. Expenditure will be monitored and reported quarterly.

9 APPROVAL OF TRAINING AND/OR EXPENSES

- 9.1** The Mayor and Councillors are encouraged to identify professional development opportunities for inclusion in individual Professional Development Plans and may seek approval from the General Manager to attend any such activities.
- 9.2** Approval of training will be prioritised to those matters identified in the Professional Development Plans.
- 9.3** Payment and reimbursement for expenses relating to a Councillor's registration and attendance at training, will be determined in accordance with Council's Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy.

10 EVALUATION

- 10.1** Council will evaluate the Professional Development Program at the end of each council term to assess whether it was effective in assisting the Mayor and Councillors to develop the capabilities required to fulfil their civic roles.

11 REPORTING

- 11.1** The General Manager will publicly report each year in Council's annual report:
- 11.1.1 The name of the Mayor and each individual Councillor that completed Council's induction program (where an induction program has been delivered during the relevant year)
 - 11.1.2 The name of the Mayor and each Councillor who participated in any ongoing professional development program during the year
 - 11.1.3 The number of training and other activities provided to the Mayor and Councillors during the year as part of a professional development program, and
 - 11.1.4 The total cost of induction and professional development activities and any other training provided to the Mayor and Councillors during the relevant year.

12 POLICY DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Act	means the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (NSW).
Council	means Cessnock City Council.
Council Official	includes Councillors, members of staff (permanent, casual or temporary), Council advisors, administrators, Council committee members, volunteers and delegates of Council.
Professional development	means the advancement of skills or expertise to succeed in the role of a Councillor through continued education.
Public Officer	means Council's delegated Public Officer under s.343 of the Act, appointed by the General Manager, currently Director Corporate and Community Services.

13 POLICY AUTHORISATIONS

No.	Authorised Function	Authorised Business Unit / Role(s)
TBA	Authorised to procure training and development activities for Councillors in accordance with this Policy	Governance and Council Support Coordinator Council Services Team Leader Executive Assistant to the General Manager

14 POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Directorate	Corporate and Community Services		
Responsible Officer	Governance and Council Support Coordinator		
Associated Procedure	N/A		
Policy Review Date	23-10-2027	Is this a local policy pursuant to Part 3, Chapter 7 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (NSW)?	No

Document Reference Number	DOC2018/026347 (Final web version) DOC2024/142758 (Draft Word version)
This policy supports Council's compliance with the following legislation: – Part 8A, <i>Local Government (General) Regulation 2021</i> (NSW)	
This policy contributes to the achievement of the following desired outcome or objectives as per Council's Delivery Program: – 5.1.1 Provide professional development opportunities for Councillors – 5.1.2 Conduct pre-induction and induction programs for the 2024 Local Government election.	
Related Documents (include reference document numbers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Records Management Policy (DOC2019/038769) ▪ Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy (DOC2020/173726) ▪ Privacy Management Plan (DOC2014/005148) ▪ Code of Conduct (DOC2018/086716) ▪ Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines (Office of Local Government) ▪ Councillor Professional Development Plan template (DOC2023/000807)

15 POLICY HISTORY

Revision	Date Approved / Authority	Description Of Changes
1	15/08/2018 (CC55/2018)	New policy adopted
2	19/08/2021 (CC60/2021)	Periodic review
3	19/04/2023 (CC18/2023)	Periodic review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update to policy template - Update to provisions to include minimum mandatory training requirements - Clarification that reporting is included in Council's annual report
4	23/10/2024 (CC57/2024)	Periodic review in preparation for adoption following 2024 Local Government election. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update to policy template - Updates to align with the Model Policy provided by the Office of Local Government Refer to Council Meeting report for a summary of key changes.