Councillor Induction & Professional Development

Policy | Governance

To ensure that Councillors can effectively perform their civic role and responsibilities

Policy No:	POL/1023	Version:	2
Service Unit:	Governance		
Responsible Officer:	Coordinator Governance		
Responsible Director:	General Manager		
Authorisation Date:	21 June 2022	Review Date:	21 June 2026
Minute No:	98/22		

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1   Background

1.1   Title of the Policy and Commencement Date

The Councillor Induction & Professional Development Policy takes effect upon adoption by Council.

1.2   Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate Council's commitment to ensuring that the Mayor and Councillors have access to induction and ongoing professional development which will assist them to develop and maintain the skills and knowledge required to effectively perform their civic role and responsibilities under the *Local Government Act, 1993*.

2   Objective

2.1   Objectives and Coverage of the Policy

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that:

- The Mayor and Councillors are provided with an induction program that enables them to be effective leaders from the very beginning of the Council's term;

- The Mayor and Councillors are provided with an ongoing professional development program that will enhance the effectiveness of Council's performance in achieving its goals;

- Council meets its statutory reporting requirements in relation to Councillor induction and professional development.

3   Application

3.1   Application of this Policy

This policy applies to all Councillors of Singleton Council, including the Mayor.

4   Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

Term	Meaning
Code of Conduct	Means the Code of Conduct adopted by Council.
Councillor	Means a person elected or appointed to civic office as a member of the governing body of Singleton Council who is not suspended, including the Mayor.

Term	Meaning
General Manager	Means the General Manager of Singleton Council and includes their delegate or authorised representative.
Professional Development	Means a seminar, conference, training course or other development opportunity relevant to the role of a Councillor or the Mayor.
Capabilities	Means the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to effectively fulfil the role of Mayor and/or Councillor specified in the Local Government Capability Framework (**Appendix A**).

5   Statement of Commitment

Singleton 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 and identifies professional development activities to build these capabilities.

6   Induction Program

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. The induction program will cover:

- An orientation to Council facilities and the Singleton Local Government Area;

- 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;

- The legislation, rules, principles and political context under which Councils operate;

- The roles and responsibilities of Councillors and the Mayor;

- Council's organisational structure, Workforce Management Strategy and the roles and responsibilities of the General Manager and Council staff;

- What Council does and how it operates, including an overview of integrated planning and reporting, land-use planning, natural resource management, financial management and asset management by Council;

- Key Council policies and procedures Councillors must comply with including the Code of Conduct;

- Council, External Organisation and Community Consultative Committees;

- The role of Council meetings and how to participate effectively in them;

- The support available to the Mayor and Councillors and where they can go to get more information or assistance; and

- Information on the process for taking the oath of office and electing the Deputy Mayor at the first Council Meeting.

In the case of the Mayor, the program will also cover:

- How to be an effective leader of the governing body and the Council;

- The role of the Chair and how to chair Council meetings;

- The Mayor's role in integrated planning and reporting;

- The Mayor's role and responsibilities under the Code of Conduct;

- The Mayor's role and responsibilities in relation to the General Manager's employment;

- The Mayor's role at regional and other representative bodies; and

- The Mayor's civic and ceremonial role.

The Mayor and Councillors must have a working knowledge and understanding of these areas by the end of the induction program.

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. Activities will aim to ensure Mayors and Councillors:

- Identify how they would like to work together as a team and identify a common vision for the governing body;

- Build relationships with each other based on trust and mutual respect that facilitate collaboration;

- Contribute to a positive and ethical culture within the governing body

- Work towards consensus as members of the governing body for the benefit of the community;

- Develop respectful negotiation skills and manage alternative views within the governing body without damaging relationships;

- Understand what supports or undermines the effective functioning of the governing body;

- Respect the diversity of skills and experiences on the governing body; and

- Communicate and uphold the decisions of Council in a respectful way, even if their own position was not adopted.

Activities should also help the Mayor, as the leader of the governing body, to:

- Act as a stabilising influence and show leadership; and

- Promote a culture of integrity and accountability within Council and when representing Council in the community and elsewhere.

The Mayor and Councillors, including those re-elected to office, must attend all induction sessions.

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.

7   Ongoing Professional Development Program

An individual ongoing professional development plan will be developed for the Mayor and each Councillor to address any gaps in the capabilities needed to effectively fulfil their role.

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 the Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy. The Mayor and Councillors are expected to complete all the activities included in their professional development plan.

Professional development activities will, wherever possible, follow the 70/20/10 principle. The 70/20/10 principle requires that:

- 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

- 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

- 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.

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.

8   Budget

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

Professional development activities that require Council funds are to be approved by the General Manager in accordance with the Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy.

10   Evaluation

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

The General Manager will publicly report each year in Council's annual report:

- 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);

- The name of the Mayor and each Councillor who participated in any ongoing professional development program during the year;

- The number of training and other activities provided to the Mayor and Councillors during the year as part of a professional development program; and

- The total cost of induction and professional development activities and any other training provided to the Mayor and Councillors during the relevant year.

12   Relevant Legislation

- *Local Government Act, 1993*

13   Document Information

Related documents and reference information in this section provides a single reference point to develop and maintain site compliance information.

13.1   Related Documents

Related documents, listed in *Table 13-1* below, are internal documents directly related to or referenced from this document.

Number	Title
POL/1008	Councillors Expenses & Facilities Policy
POL/1011	Code of Conduct
N/A	<u>Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines – 2018</u> issued by the Office of Local Government

Table 13-1 – Related documents

14   Responsible Officer / Policy Owner

Ownership of this policy rests with the Coordinator Governance.

15   Responsibilities

Parties or Persons	Responsibilities
Mayor and Councillors	• 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 Council.
Coordinator Governance	• Planning, scheduling and facilitating induction and professional development activities for the Mayor and Councillors in consultation with the General Manager.
General Manager	• Overall responsibility for Singleton Council's induction and professional development program.

16   Approval

As per cover sheet.

17   Monitoring

This policy will be monitored by the Manager Integrated Risk to ensure compliance.

18   Review Date

This policy, once adopted, is to remain in force until it is reviewed by Council. This policy is to be reviewed approximately every four (4) years to ensure that it meets legislative requirements.

19 Record Keeping, Confidentiality and Privacy

This policy is to be made available for public viewing as required under the *Government Information (Public Access) 2009, NSW*.

20 Breaches and Sanctions

Any breaches of this Policy will be referred to the General Manager for appropriate action.

21 Document History

The below table provides a summary of changes and amendments to this document.

Version.	Date Amended	Author	Comments (e.g. reasons for review)
2	26/04/2022	L Britton	• Four yearly review. • Updated reference number and dates as relevant. • Review period changed to four (4) years. • Added document history.

Appendix A - Local Government Capability Framework

Personal attributes

	Clr	Mayor
Manage self		
Talks to the mayor/councillor, general manager and other councillors about own role and responsibilities, and seeks feedback	✓	✓
Pursues responsibilities with energy, drive and commitment	✓	✓
Manages own time effectively, balancing demands in line with council priorities	✓	✓
Shows awareness of own strengths and areas for growth	✓	✓
Looks for and takes opportunities to develop knowledge and skills as a councillor	✓	✓
Honestly examines personal motivation and capability as mayor		✓
Reflects on and integrates feedback, showing a capacity and willingness to modify own behaviours		✓
Display resilience and adaptability		
Is flexible and willing to change their mind in light of new information	✓	✓
Stays calm and objective in challenging situations	✓	✓
Advocates constructively for an idea or position, even in the face of strong, contrary views	✓	✓
Listens when challenged and seeks to understand criticisms before responding	✓	✓
Stays positive and perseveres in the face of resistance or setbacks	✓	✓
Accepts public feedback and responds in a thoughtful and considered way	✓	✓
Reads situations quickly and shows leadership in times of crisis		✓
Acts as a stabilising influence in challenging and emotionally charged situations		✓
Act with integrity		
Is open, honest and consistent in words and behaviour	✓	✓
Tells the truth and admits to own mistakes	✓	✓
Maintains confidentiality	✓	✓
Takes steps to clarify ethical issues and seeks advice when unsure what to do	✓	✓
Follows the code of conduct, legislation and policies applicable to councillors/mayors	✓	✓
Speaks out against illegal and inappropriate behaviour and perceived conflicts of interest	✓	✓
Helps councillors understand their obligations to comply with the codes of conduct, legislation and policies		✓
Identifies and discusses ethical issues with councillors		✓
Promotes a culture of integrity within council and in dealings external to council		✓

	Clr	Mayor
Demonstrate accountability		
Prepares appropriately for council meetings	✓	✓
Acts in the public interest and observes the highest standards of personal conduct at all times	✓	✓
Takes responsibility for fulfilling the role of councillor/mayor to the best of their ability	✓	✓
Is transparent in actions and decision making, declaring potential conflicts	✓	✓
Models the highest standards of accountability, providing transparency to enable public scrutiny		✓
Provides advice on strategies taken by council to be accountable, transparent and efficient		✓

Relationships

	Clr	Mayor
Communicate and engage		
Clearly communicates ideas and arguments	✓	✓
Adjusts tone, pace and message for different audiences	✓	✓
Listens when others are speaking and asks appropriate, respectful questions	✓	✓
Shows sensitivity to cultural, religious and other individual differences when interacting with others	✓	✓
Uses communication channels that are suitable for the diversity in the community	✓	✓
Creates opportunities for people to engage with council and contribute to public disclosure and debate	✓	✓
Community and customer focus		
Keeps up to date on current issues affecting the community	✓	✓
Shows pride in and talks positively about the community and region	✓	✓
Commits time and energy to serving the community	✓	✓
Works towards social, environmental and economic sustainability in the community/region	✓	✓
Collects and uses broad community feedback to identify opportunities for improvement	✓	✓
Builds effective relationships with a range of people who reflect the diversity in the community	✓	✓

	Clr	Mayor
Work collaboratively		
Shares information with other councillors about community issues, stakeholders and activities	✔	✔
Is respectful of council staff and receptive to their advice	✔	✔
Shows respect for the diversity of skills and experience on the governing body	✔	✔
Initiates collaborative forums on issues facing the community	✔	✔
Works together with stakeholder networks for the benefit of the community and region	✔	✔
Encourages councillors to work collaboratively		✔
Builds a productive working relationship with the general manager based on clear expectations, trust and respect		✔
Supports positive relations between the general manager and the governing body		✔
Builds partnerships between council and external stakeholders that are of strategic value to council		✔
Facilitates and supports strategic collaboration with other councils to benefit the broader region		✔
Influence and negotiate		
Uses understanding of political processes and networks to develop a negotiation strategy	✔	✔
Listens to contrary points of view and endeavours to find common ground	✔	✔
Influence others with a fair and considered approach and sound arguments	✔	✔
Avoids starting from an entrenched position and is willing to give and take	✔	✔
Wins concessions without damaging relationships	✔	✔
Establishes and maintains relationships outside council in order to find common ground and further council's position		✔
Anticipates points of contention and plans negotiations accordingly		✔
Steers discussion and debate towards achieving an acceptable outcome		✔

Results

	Clr	Mayor
Plan and prioritise		
Identifies and pursues critical priorities and sets aside less critical activities	✓	✓
Contributes to setting clear performance goals that include quality measures	✓	✓
Considers council performance reports and rollover of projects when making new plans	✓	✓
Considers the impact of changes, e.g. government policy/economic conditions and budgets, on strategic plans	✓	✓
Incorporates sound risk management principles into strategic planning	✓	✓
Works with the general manager to translate strategic direction into a delivery program and operational plan		✓
Monitors progress against the delivery program and operational plan		✓
Considers council's current and potential future role within the community and region when planning		✓
Think and solve problems		
Gathers and investigates information from a variety of sources	✓	✓
Asks questions to get to the heart of the issue and define the problem clearly	✓	✓
Considers the broader context and long-term impacts of policy options	✓	✓
Works with others to assess options and identify appropriate solutions	✓	✓
Create and innovate		
Thinks about issues and opportunities from different viewpoints	✓	✓
Looks for non-obvious solutions	✓	✓
Encourages independent thinking and new ideas from others	✓	✓
Explores innovative solutions with long-standing community-wide impact	✓	✓
Deliver results		
Monitors and provides advice on the delivery of customer/community focused services	✓	✓
Instigates and champions initiatives to deliver community outcomes	✓	✓
Identifies and addresses potential risks to the achievement of council goals	✓	✓
Engages with senior staff about strategies to improve council performance		✓

Resources

	Clr	Mayor
Finance		
Uses basic financial terminology appropriately	✔	✔
Makes informed contributions to debate about the allocation of financial resources	✔	✔
Demonstrates respect for public funds and the obligation to manage council resources responsibly	✔	✔
Is aware of financial risks and strategies to manage and minimise these	✔	✔
Is able to discuss implications of council's long term financial plan, audited financial statements and budget reviews	✔	✔
Identifies and supports opportunities to generate revenue and attract investment	✔	✔
Promotes the role of sound financial management and its impact on council effectiveness		✔
Assets and tools		
Engages in strategic planning to ensure the organisation's assets support delivery of the strategic plan	✔	✔
Makes informed contributions to debate about the allocation of assets to community priorities	✔	✔
Supports asset risk minimisation strategies, plans and outcomes for council	✔	✔
Promotes the role of councils as custodians of community assets	✔	✔
Ensures asset management decisions consider long term financial sustainability	✔	✔
Promotes the role of sound asset management and its impact on long term financial sustainability		✔
Technology and information		
Uses a range of technologies to communicate and engage with the community	✔	✔
Supports the introduction of new technologies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the council	✔	✔
Procurement and contracts		
Exercises commercial acumen in reviewing and approving council contracts and tenders	✔	✔
Makes decisions on council tenders according to value for money, probity and community benefit	✔	✔

Civic leadership

	Clr	Mayor
Represent communities		
Makes themselves available to discuss issues and council activities with members of the community	✓	✓
Seeks to understand the range of views on complex issues in the community	✓	✓
Raises issues that are important to constituents with council	✓	✓
Treats all people in the community impartially and champions their right to be heard	✓	✓
Uses a variety of approaches to gather views from a range of individuals and organisations		✓
Advocates for local interests in dealings with external stakeholders, including other sectors and governments		✓
Inspire direction and purpose		
Demonstrates passion, enthusiasm and personal dedication to council's vision for the community	✓	✓
Champions the community strategic plan and communicates the way forward	✓	✓
Encourages community involvement in council planning processes	✓	✓
Communicates the context and parameters surrounding council strategies and plans	✓	✓
Communicates the purpose and plans using a variety of channels to reach many audiences		✓
Regularly communicates progress against the community strategic plan		✓
Govern responsibly		
Contributes constructively to debate in council	✓	✓
Works towards consensus as a member of the governing body	✓	✓
Contributes to a positive and ethical culture within the governing body	✓	✓
Participates responsibly in exercising council's employer functions in relation to the general manager	✓	✓
Acts in a way that preserves the health and safety of people in the council workplace	✓	✓
Leads constructive council meetings with a view to reaching consensus		✓
Cultivates a positive and ethical culture within the governing body		✓
Works with the general manager to ensure legal and regulatory frameworks are applied consistently by council		✓
Sets clear performance standards for the general manager and monitors progress		✓
Regularly discusses performance with the general manager and addresses performance issues early		✓

	Clr	Mayor
Make quality decisions		
Makes considered decisions on merit in the public interest	✔	✔
Considers information about the context and regulatory environment before making decisions	✔	✔
Considers financial and budget implications, including value for money, in making decisions	✔	✔
Explains council decision-making process to constituents	✔	✔
Communicates the decisions of council in a respectful way, even if own position was not adopted	✔	✔
Assists the community to understand council decisions in context, considering priorities and constraints	✔	✔
Ensures council works through issues, considering all relevant information, before making decisions		✔
Ensures council considers financial and budget implications in making decisions		✔