

City of Greater Geraldton Council Policy

4.1 COUNCIL MEMBER CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TRAVEL

SUSTAINABILITY THEME

Leadership

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines to Council Members with regard to:

- Completion of training in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995* section 5.126(1) and regulations.
- Access to training and development programs that may enhance and improve the skills necessary to perform their role and function as a Council Member.
- Travel and accommodation arrangements when required to travel on City business.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy provides a framework to all Council Members on training, professional development and travel related to City Representation, for the benefit of the council and the community.

POLICY DETAILS

1. Professional Development

1.1. Commitment to professional development

- 1.1.1. As the public face of Council and as community representatives, Council Members play an integral leadership role in the processes for the development, communication and representation of the Council Strategic Plan and Council's policies, strategies and programs.
- 1.1.2. Professional development for Council Members contributes towards a positive presentation of the council for the betterment of the organisation and the community.
- 1.1.3. Council will allocate funds through its budget process to meet approved professional development needs of Council Members.

1.2. Mandatory Training

Each Council Member must complete training in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995* section 5.126(1) and the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*:

1.2.1. Council Member Essentials

A Council Member must pass the course titled *Council Member Essentials* in accordance with the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* section 35, within a period of twelve months beginning on the day on which the Council Member is elected. The course consists of the following modules:

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

Is provided by any of the following bodies:

- i. North Metropolitan TAFE;
- ii. South Metropolitan TAFE; and
- iii. WALGA.

1.2.2. Exemption from Mandatory Training

A Council Member is exempt from the requirement in section 5.126(1) of the *Local Government Act 1995* if:

- 1.2.2.1. the Council Member passed either of the following courses within the period of five years ending immediately before the day on which the Council Member is elected:
 - *Council Member Essentials*;
 - *52756 WA Diploma of Local Government (Elected Member)*; or
- 1.2.2.2. the Council Member passed the course titled *LGASS00002 Elected Member Skill Set* before 1 July 2019 and within a period of five years ending immediately before the day on which the Council Member is elected.
- 1.2.2.3. A person who is a Council Member on the day on which the *Local Government Regulations Amendment (Induction and Training) Regulations 2019* regulation 8 comes into operation is exempt from the requirement in section 5.126(1) until the end of their term of office.

1.3. Training during term of office

1.3.1. The Council Member that undertakes a Diploma of Local Government and other training is to complete the units and assessments in a timely manner within their term of office.

1.3.2. Monthly updates on progress are to be provided to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, where requested.

1.4. Personal development

1.4.1. Council Members are encouraged to identify individual and group personal development needs to enhance their effectiveness. As the needs of individual Council Members may vary, each member is encouraged to seek the assistance of the Chief Executive Officer in analysing his or her particular requirements and in identifying appropriate courses, seminars and training to meet those needs.

1.4.2. A Professional Development Study Agreement (i.e. refund requirements if subject not completed successfully) is to be put in place should a Council Member wish to undertake tertiary education, which is to be approved by the Mayor in the first instance [refer to 1.7.2].

1.5. Conferences, seminars, forums or delegations

- 1.5.1. A Council Member who is funded by the council to attend a conference, seminar, forum, delegation or similar event, shall participate as a representative of the council, not as an individual.
- 1.5.2. Council Members may participate in conferences, seminars, forums, delegations or similar events where it can be demonstrated that attendance will:
- Provide information on a contemporary issue, so that the council can contribute to discussion or debate;
 - Put forward the council's viewpoint during formation of a collaborative policy, or stance on an issue;
 - Meet community expectations that the council representation is necessary for the benefit of the community;
 - Provide development to the member in his / her role; or
 - Provide improvements to the built, social, economic and natural well-being of the community.
- 1.5.3. Where voting delegates are required to represent the City of Greater Geraldton – i.e. Western Australia Local Government Association (WALGA) Week, this is to be approved by the council.

1.6. Funding for Professional Development

The council will allocate funds for professional development during the budget process each year to provide for the professional development of Council Members. In deciding whether funding approval is granted the Mayor or Deputy Mayor should take into consideration the Council Member's remaining term of office.

1.6.1. Funding of the approved training will be at the Council Members own expenses, during their term of office, should they:

1.6.1.1. not complete the Diploma of Local Government, or other approved training; and/or

1.6.1.2. fail a subject, the course, or not complete the tertiary education.

1.7. Applications for professional development funding

- 1.7.1. To maximise the effectiveness of allocated resources, the council will only meet the cost of professional development outlined in this policy, subject to approval of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor.
- 1.7.2. A Council Member is required to complete an application form (**Appendix A**) to facilitate participation in professional development.
- 1.7.3. If a request for professional development cannot be accommodated within the budget allocation the Mayor, in conjunction with the CEO, will determine if additional funding may be available from another area of the budget.
- 1.7.4. Applications to attend any interstate and overseas conferences, seminars, forums, delegations or similar events under this policy must be discussed with the Mayor or Deputy Mayor prior to arrangements being made.
- 1.7.5. The Mayor or CEO may limit the attendance of multiple Council Members to a conference to ensure the effective governance of the council.

2. Report on Training

The City must prepare a report for each financial year on the training completed by Council Members in the financial year. The report must be published on the City's website within one month after the end of the financial year to which the report relates.

3. Travel and Accommodation

Travel and accommodation expenses incurred as part of attending professional development activities must be in accordance with Section 3 of this policy - Travel and Accommodation.

Travel requests during a State of Emergency and Public Health State of Emergency will be reviewed and are to adhere to the current directives issued by the State Government.

3.1. Travel within Western Australia

Council Members may attend City Representation events within Western Australia during their term of office upon the following conditions:

- 3.1.1. The travel falls within the definitions for conference, professional development or delegation;
- 3.1.2. Prior approval has been granted by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor as applicable;
- 3.1.3. In deciding whether approval is to be granted the Mayor or Deputy Mayor should take into consideration the Council Members remaining term of office; and
- 3.1.4. There is sufficient budget allocation for the Council Members travel.

3.2. Travel outside of Western Australia

Council Members may attend City Representation events held outside WA and overseas during their term of office upon the following conditions:

- 3.2.1. The travel falls within the definitions for conference, professional development or delegation.
- 3.2.2. An item has been presented to the council specifying:
 - the benefit to the City of the attendance at the conference, professional development or delegation;
 - whether, if applicable, there is a necessity to send more than one Council Member; and
 - whether the information to be discussed at the conference or professional development can be sourced from within Western Australia.
- 3.2.3. Approval has been granted by council resolution;
- 3.2.4. There is sufficient budget allocation for the Council Members travel.

3.3. General conditions of travel

3.3.1. Bookings

Travel, accommodation and registrations will be booked by the Office of the Chief Executive Officer upon receipt and approval of the application form (Annex A). This will allow the City to take advantage of any discounts offered. Where practicable, travel requests should be provided at least one month before travel to allow adequate time for bookings to be made.

3.3.2. Travel

- 3.3.2.1. The cost of air travel to and from destinations is to be by the shortest most practical route unless additional travel is contemplated before or after a conference.
- 3.3.2.2. Where a Council Member chooses to arrive earlier or extend their stay at the location of a conference or deviates from the travel arrangements, then the Council Member will be responsible for the full cost associated with that extended stay and/or variation to travel arrangements for private purposes. The exception would be if the flight schedules determine an extended stay is required.
- 3.3.2.3. Air travel will be booked as economy class on the most economical flight. The cost of any upgrade to business class shall be paid from the Council Members personal funds.
- 3.3.2.4. The Mayor shall have the authority to assess special, medical or extenuating circumstances and approve business travel. Such requests must be in writing and supported by appropriate evidence.
- 3.3.2.5. Hire cars may be booked only if required to meet the reasonable travel requirements of the conference or professional development.
- 3.3.2.6. Taxi fares for reasonable travel requirements relevant to the conference and/or council business:
- will be reimbursed upon return on the production of receipts to verify the expense; or
 - can be paid with Cab charge card or vouchers issued to the - Council Member prior to departure.
- 3.3.2.7. Council Members who use their private vehicle for conference travel will be reimbursed for vehicle costs in accordance with the Public Service Award Motor Vehicle Allowance to a maximum amount equivalent to what it would have cost to travel by air.
- 3.3.2.8. A Travel Expenses Reimbursement form (**Appendix B**) is to be completed and submitted to the Office of the CEO to process for approval and payment.
- 3.3.2.9. A part of the City's business travel insurance policy, any travel insurance for Council Members or their spouses is provided for as part of that certificate of currency.

3.3.3. Accommodation

Accommodation will be booked, where practicable, at the associated venue or, if unavailable, at premises in close proximity to the venue. Bookings will include accommodation the night before and/or after the event where necessary because of travel, airline flights and/or event timetables.

3.3.4. Meal and Incidentals

- 3.3.4.1. The City will pay for reasonable costs of meal and incidentals. Such expenses which will be paid or reimbursed by the City include:
- Taxi, train, bus and tram fares to/from the airport and the venue;
 - Vehicle hire, petrol and parking fees;
 - Breakfasts, lunches, dinners not included in the registration fee;

- Reasonable telephone and internet charges and ICT expenses;
 - Optional activities related to the conference/ training; and
 - Laundry and dry cleaning if the stay is for more than three days.
- 3.3.4.2. All costs are to be fully substantiated by receipts and invoices and a Reimbursement of Expenses form (**Appendix C**) is to be completed and submitted to the Office of the CEO to process for approval and payment.
- 3.3.4.3. The City will not pay for or reimburse:
- Mini bar expenses;
 - Entertainment costs not associated with those scheduled as part of the City Representation event;
 - Any expenses associated with matters other than those attended to while attending the City Representation event; and
 - A meal allowance if the conference provides meals as part of the package.

3.3.5. Accompanying persons

- 3.3.5.1. A partner or spouse may accompany a Council Member to a City Representation event.
- 3.3.5.2. All expenses incurred by the accompanying person are to be paid by the accompanying person or Council Member, except the following which will be paid or reimbursed by the City:
- Official conference meals; and
 - Accommodation provided there is no increase in accommodation costs arising if the Council Member attending the event on their own.
- 3.3.5.3. Where the City meets an account containing any expenditure of cost incurred on behalf of an accompanying person attending, such expenditure must be repaid to the City by the Council Member/ accompanying person within 30 days of being invoiced for such expenditure.

4. Workplace Information

Following participation in an event covered by section 1 or a City Representation event of more than 2 days' duration covered in section 2 (excluding Local Government Week):

- 4.1. The Council Member(s) is expected to submit an individual or composite report (where approval has been granted for more than one member to attend) for inclusion in the "Reports to be Received" in the next Council Agenda, within 30 days of attendance.
- 4.2. The report should document:
- the program and major points of interest to the City;
 - whether the objectives of the participation were met;
 - the benefits to the Council Member, council and the community; and
 - the value of future attendance or representation by council at similar events.
- 4.3. All conference and training papers remain the property of the City.

KEY TERM DEFINITION

Council Member(s) means Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors.

Conference means conferences, seminars, congresses, forums, workshops, study tours, delegations and events relevant to the role of a councillor.

Professional Development means personal development such as undergraduate and post graduate studies, **tertiary education**, short courses, study tours, conferences, seminars, forums, or similar events that will assist a councillor in their broad civic leadership role.

Delegation means any formal group visit, authorised by Council, to an external organisation representing the City of Greater Geraldton.

The Terms "Conference, Professional Development and Delegation" are collectively used in this policy under the term "City Representation".

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for implementing this policy.

WORKPLACE INFORMATION

Local Government Act 1995

Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996

City of Greater Geraldton - Code of Conduct for Council Members and Committee Council Member.

Directorate		Officer	Review Cycle	Next Due
Office of the CEO		PA for the Chief Executive Officer	Biennial and after each Ordinary Election S5.128	2026
Version	Decision Reference	Synopsis		
4.	CEO## - May 2024	Policy Review		

Application Form

Council Member Professional Development

Please Refer to Point 3 General conditions of travel/3.3.1 Bookings.

Elected Member Name: _____

Type of Professional Development	Tick Box ✓
Professional Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Essential Training, as per Local Government Act 1995	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conference, Seminar or Forum	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delegation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Event* _____

Date/s: _____ Location: _____

Cost: _____

*Attach any information, flyer etc. you may have

How will participation in this professional development event meet the criteria# in Council's policy?

For criteria refer to [CP 4.1 Council Member Continuing Professional Development & Travel](#).

Council Member:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Office Use only

Does the request for professional development meet the criteria in Council's Council Member Training & Travel Policy?

Yes / No* (*Circle option)

Approved: _____ Date: _____
Mayor / Deputy Mayor

Submit Completed form to the Office of the CEO for processing

Council Member Reimbursement of Travel Expenses

Council Member Name: _____

In accordance with [CP 4.1 Council Member Continuing Professional Development & Travel](#), I hereby certify that the following expenses are true and correct and were incurred to enable me to undertake my functions as a Council Member of the City of Greater Geraldton.

Period Claim From: _____ To: _____

Item No.	Date	Details of Meeting/purpose of attendance	Location / Address	Kms travelled
No.1	1/1/2019	Attended the Northern Country Wine Meeting as a Council Member representative.	Mingenew Sports Centre, Mingeneew	117km
No.2				
No.3				
No.4				
No.5				
No.6				
No.7				
No.8				
No.9				
No.10				
No.11				
No.12				
No.13				
No.14				
No.15				
Total Kms being claimed				

Council Member:

Signature _____ Date: _____

Office Use only

Kms x (rate) Use the rate for the income year for which you are claiming a deduction

[Car expenses | Australian Taxation Office \(ato.gov.au\)](#)

Authorised by CEO:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approved by Financial Accountant:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Submit your completed form to the Office of the CEO for processing.

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Council Member Reimbursement of Expenses

Council Member Name: _____

In accordance with [CP 4.1 Council Member Continuing Professional Development & Travel](#), I hereby certify that the following expenses are true and correct and were incurred to enable me to undertake my functions as a Council Member of the City of Greater Geraldton.

All Receipts must accompany this claim for reimbursement.

Period Claim From: _____ To: _____

Receipt No.	Date	Details of expenses/ Purpose of attendance	Full Meeting / event name	Total Cost
No.1	3/4/19	Taxi from Regional Capitals Australia WA Meeting to Perth Airport, attending Council Member representative	Regional Capitals Australia WA	\$45.00
No.2				
No.3				
No.4				
No.5				
No.6				
No.7				
No.8				
No.9				
No.10				
No.11				
No.12				
		Total Claim		\$

ATO Determined Reasonable Claim Amounts as per Table 1 [TD 2023/3 | Legal database \(ato.gov.au\)](#)

Council Member:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Office Use only

Authorised by CEO

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approved by Financial Accountant:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____