



Policy Title	Councillor Induction and Professional Development Policy
Policy Category	Public
Number & Version	SVC-GOV-PO-074-01
Policy Owner	People Culture and Governance
Approval by	Council
Effective date	
Date for review	September 2020

1. STRATEGIC PURPOSE

Snowy Valleys Council (Council) will commit and support the elected members in acquiring and maintaining the skills and knowledge needed to govern in a diverse local government through a systematic approach of induction and ongoing professional development programs that will fulfil their responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1993 ('the Act').

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Council recognises its responsibility in developing an induction and ongoing professional development program for the Mayor and Councillors to ensure they can fulfil their statutory roles and responsibilities. This program, will have a professional development plan that will identify gaps in their capabilities (i.e. their knowledge, skills and attributes) and identify professional development activities to build these capabilities.

3. DEFINITIONS

Elected Members – one who holds a public office by voting

OLG – Office of Local Government

4. CONTENT

4.1 Induction program

Holding an induction program each Council term is a mandatory requirement under the Regulation. The mayor and all Councillors (including those re-elected to office) must attend all induction sessions.

The Office of Local Government (OLG) provides support to Councils and Councillors by conducting *Hit the Ground Running* workshops for new and returning Councillors following local government elections. It is expected that all Councillors and the mayor will attend this one-day workshop.

In addition to the OLG workshop, Council will develop an induction program for new and returning Councillors which is mandatory to participate (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.

There will be two core components of the induction program:

- A knowledge-based component that ensures the mayor and Councillors have the information they need to undertake their roles (this includes a supplementary component for the mayor), and
- A team-building component designed to bring Councillors together to form a collaborative, positive and united governing body.

Knowledge component

The induction program will cover the following:

- An orientation to Council facilities and the local government area
- An overview of the key issues and tasks for the new Council, including Council's community strategic 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 CEO and Council employees
- What Council does and how it operates, including an overview of integrated planning and reporting, land-use planning, natural resource management and asset management by Council
- Key Council policies and procedures Councillors must comply with, including the *Code of Conduct*
- The role of Council meeting and how to participate effectively in them in accordance with the *Code of Meeting Practice*
- The support available to the mayor and Councillors and where they can go to get more information or assistance
- Information on the process for taking the oath of the office.

In 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 accordance with the *Code of Meeting Practice*
- 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
- The mayor's civic and ceremonial role.

Team building component

The induction program will include team building activities which 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 support or undermines the effective functioning of the governing body
- Respect the diversity of skills and experiences on the governing body,
- Communicate and uphold the decision 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,
- Promote a culture of integrity and accountability within Council and when representing Council in the community and elsewhere.

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.

4.2 Ongoing professional development program

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

Each professional development plan will span Council's term, and identify professional development activities that the mayor and Councillor will participate in. Professional development activities will be prioritised according to the need and approved by the CEO where Council funds are required and 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.

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,
- 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.

5. REPORTING

The CEO will publicly report each year in Council's annual report against each individual plan:

- 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 that had a professional development plan
- Without naming individual Councillors, the percentage of professional development activities offered to the mayor and Councillors during the relevant year that were completed, and
- The total cost of induction and professional development activities provided to the mayor and Councillors during the relevant year.

Non-participation will be managed by the CEO and the governing body.

6. 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.

The *Office of the CEO* will be responsible for the implementation, scheduling, organising and the monitoring of the yearly development programs. Provide yearly reports of the progress, attendance and expenditure of each of the elected members in the annual report.

7. ASSOCIATED LEGISLATION

Councillors are bound by the Local Government Act 1993 and Local Government Regulations 2005. All mayors and Councillors have a responsibility to make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform their roles. To support this, the CEO is required under the Regulation to ensure the delivery of:

- an induction program for newly elected and returning Councillors and a specialised supplementary induction program for the mayor within six months of their election,
- an ongoing Professional Development Program for the mayor and each Councillor over the term of the Council to assist them to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform their roles. The content of the ongoing Professional Development Program is to be determined in consultation with the mayor and each Councillor.

Under the Regulation, mayors and Councillors must make all reasonable endeavours to attend and participate in the activities offered to them as part of an Induction and Professional Development Program.

8. ASSOCIATED COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities for Councillors SVC- EXE-PO-002-03
 Code of Conduct – SVC – RP – STY – 001 - 02
 Code of Meeting Practice – SVC – EXE – M – 023 - 03

9. HISTORY

Date	Action	Name	Policy Number	Resolution Date	Resolution Number
18/10/2019	New	Councillor Induction and Professional Development	SVC-GOV-PO-074-01		