



COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Policy No.	C87	Adoption Date:	Council Meeting 17 August 2022
Revision Date:	August 2026		
Directorate:	Performance & Innovation	Department:	Governance Team
GOOD GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK – OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES			
Supporting Pillar:	Pillar 2 - Culture & Behaviour		
Link to Pillar:	The Councillor Development Policy supports the 'Culture and Behaviour' Pillar through the provision of resources and opportunities for the ongoing development of the Mayor and Councillors' team culture and capabilities.		

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of the *Councillor Development Policy (C87)* (the Policy) is to support the Mayor and Councillors to build an effective capable cohesive team, and equip them with the skills, knowledge and industry network connections to perform their roles. From this base the Councillors' team. Together, will be able to work together to deliver the best outcomes for the community they are elected to serve.
- 1.2. This Policy has been developed to support the Mayor and Councillors in fulfilling the values and commitments they have made in the Councillor Charter and Code of Conduct, and to perform their respective roles and responsibilities in accordance with 'Part 2 – Councils' of the *Local Government Act 2020*. In the Councillor Charter the Mayor and Councillors acknowledge the privileged role they have and they strive to:
 1. Reflect and learn from the past while maintaining a future focus;
 2. Be outward focused;
 3. Build mutual trust through clear communication, advocacy and consistency;
 4. Look for strategic opportunities in growth and change; and
 5. Assume good intent and always look for a better way.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. The scope of this Policy applies to the Mayor and Councillors of the South Gippsland Shire. It also provides support and guidance to the Chief Executive



Officer (CEO), and others engaged by Council, who play a role in the development of the Mayor and Councillors individually and collectively.

- 2.2. This Policy supports the [Councillor Support and Reimbursement Policy C51](#) (Policy C51) and is to be read and applied in accordance with the Policy C51. Policy C51 outlines the level of resources and approval mechanisms applicable to the development of Councillors.

3. POLICY PRINCIPLES

Development of Team Culture

- 3.1. The Mayor and Councillors will be supported to build a culture of continuous improvement within the Councillor group. Tools that will be drawn upon to assist this development include:
 - 3.1.1. A comprehensive 'Councillor Transition Program' to induct each new Council, with a focus on establishing a positive team culture, completing mandatory induction modules and a range of additional modules to prepare the Mayor and Councillors for their roles. The program is to be framed in consultation with the Councillor group;
 - 3.1.1. Periodic reflection and development sessions will be scheduled as a collective group, to consider their efficacy as a team and individual roles as Mayor or Deputy Mayor or Councillor in living up to the values and commitments Councillors have all agreed to in the Councillor Charter and Code of Conduct and performance in the role of Councillor, Deputy Mayor and Mayor. These sessions may be coordinated by an independent facilitator; and
 - 3.1.2. Undertake further group training and refresher sessions throughout the term in office focusing on areas where skill and/or knowledge development is deemed required or beneficial by the CEO and/or Mayor.
 - 3.1.3. The Mayor and Councillors will hold each other to account for their individual and collective performance and behavior. The Mayor will create regular opportunities to meet either one on one with Councillors and/or with multiple or all Councillors to discuss the effectiveness and presentation of Councillor updates and debates in Council Meetings, or interactions with staff or community members.

Development of Individual Capability

- 3.2. Personal development of individual Councillors will be supported where skill, knowledge, and/or development of networks will give Councillors the confidence to perform their roles and enhance their abilities. Tools that will be drawn upon to assist this development include:
 - 3.2.1. Councillors will be able to request training in particular areas of personalised skill development.



- 3.2.2. The Mayor and Councillors will be able to attend relevant conferences and seminars pertinent to their respective roles. A particular area of focus may include knowledge building to assist them as the Council appointed representatives on specific committees.
- 3.2.3. The number of attendees to any one conference or seminar, or number of personalised skill development training opportunities provided for each individual Councillor, may be limited due to costs, appropriate representation and equity of opportunity across the Councillor group.

Development of the Mayor's Capability

- 3.3. The Mayor, as the Councillors' leader, will primarily be the Councillor representing Council at local government industry sector conferences, seminars and workshops.

Where the Mayor is unable to attend, the Deputy Mayor may be provided with the opportunity to represent the Mayor and Councillors by participating in the events, or the Mayor may nominate another Councillor to attend on their behalf.

- 3.4. The Mayor will be able to request personal coaching for their leadership role. Appropriate providers will be sought by the CEO for the Mayor's consideration, along with determining the duration of the coaching arrangement that can reasonably be provided.
- 3.5. The CEO may offer specific training to the Mayor in areas where increased knowledge, skill and capability are required or considered beneficial for the leadership of the group. These training activities will be determined in consultation between the Mayor and CEO, or CEO's nominated officer.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

This Policy mitigates Council's risks as described below:

People

- 4.1. The Policy recognises the need for continuous development for the Mayor and Councillors to enable them to fulfil the obligations of their roles. This is best achieved by imbedding a culture of continuous improvement in the Councillor group, in line with contemporary leadership practice.

Reputational

- 4.2. This Policy seeks to mitigate the risk of having a dysfunctional Council by providing opportunities for Councillors to proactively consider how effective they are in meeting the standards and commitments they have agreed to in the Councillor Code of Conduct and Councillor Charter.

Governance

- 4.3. This Policy supports Council's obligations to comply with the mandatory training of Councillors required under the *Local Government Act 2020*. The Policy seeks to



assist Councillors maintain the trust and confidence of the community by providing relevant development opportunities that will allow them to maintain sound standards of good governance, integrity, ethical behaviour and appropriate conduct.

Safety

- 4.4. The Policy focuses on developing a positive team culture with the need for regular opportunities to reflect on shared effectiveness in meeting the values and behaviors committed to in the Councillor Code of Conduct and Councillor Charter. This focus seeks to mitigate safety, health and well-being concerns for Councillors, in the performance of their roles. A strong constructive team culture will be beneficial in supporting the Mayor and Councillors with some of the more difficult aspects of their roles.

5. IMPLEMENTATION STATEMENT

Human Rights Charter

- 5.1. This Policy has considered the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* in its development.
- 5.2. This Policy is a key mechanism for providing assurance to the Council that Councillors are meeting their obligations to treat each other, staff and members of the community with dignity and respect, as required by the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and associated obligations.

Gender Equality

- 5.3. This Policy has considered the *Gender Equality Act 2020* in its development. The development requirements of every Mayor and Councillor will be provided on case by case circumstances and the specific needs of each individual.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.4. The CEO will develop a comprehensive Councillor Transition Program in preparation of the establishment of each new Council. The Program will be refined in consultation with the Mayor and Councillors and delivered in the first twelve months of each Council's term, with mandatory sessions completed within six months. Suitable presenters and facilitators will be engaged by the CEO's delegate for all the relevant in-house sessions.
- 5.5. The Mayor and Councillors will actively participate in the completion of the Councillor Transition Program. Councillors are responsible for completing the mandatory components within the first six months of their term in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.
- 5.6. The Mayor, with the support of all Councillors, is responsible for holding constructive one on one, or group sessions, with Councillors to consider the individual and collective performance and behavior of Councillors in Council Meetings, briefings and interactions with staff and community members.



- 5.7. The Mayor and Councillors are responsible for requesting training and/or attendance at conferences and seminars. The CEO, through their delegate, will make the necessary arrangements.
- 5.8. The CEO, in consultation with the Mayor will arrange for periodic reviews of the Councillors efficacy as a team with an independent facilitator.
- 5.9. The Mayor and Councillors Executive Officer may assist the Mayor and Councillors with bookings and arrangements associated with conferences, seminars, sector-led sessions and personalised training activities.

Non-compliance with this Policy

- 5.10. Non-participation in the mandatory requirements of the Councillor Transition Program within six months of the election, may result in allowances being withheld until such time as the training is completed.

6. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- 6.1. This Policy will be reviewed and adopted by Council on a four-year cycle, or earlier if changes to legislation or practices require an earlier intervention.

7. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Legislative Provisions	Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 Data Protection Act 2014 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 Freedom of Information Act 1982 Gender Equality Act 2020 and Gender Equality Regulations 2020 Local Government Act 2020 Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020
Council Supporting Documents	Councillor Code of Conduct C14 Councillor Support and Expenditure Policy C51 Governance Rules 2020 C82 Human Rights Policy C52 Information Privacy Policy C22

8. DEFINITIONS

Independent Facilitator	Is a suitably qualified person, appointed by Council, who is not a Councillor or Officer of Council, who supports the Mayor to facilitate the self-assessment process.
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9. REVISION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Sections Modified	CM9 Ref#
1.0	Council	17 August 2022	New Policy	D3584622