



# Burwood

Inc.1874

## **COUNCILLOR INDUCTION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

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Office of Local Government Guidelines issued under Section 23A of the *Local Government Act*  
1993

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Public Document  
Adopted by Council: 26 March 2019 (Min. No. 30/19)  
Ref. No.: 19/12714[v2]  
Version No.: 1  
Ownership: Governance

Purpose .....	3
Scope .....	3
Statement of Commitment .....	3
Induction Program.....	3
Ongoing Professional Development Program .....	5
Responsibilities .....	6
Budget .....	6
Approval of Training and/or Expenses.....	6
Evaluation .....	6
Reporting .....	6
Related Information/Glossary.....	7
Review .....	7
Contact .....	7

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate Burwood 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* (the Act).

## Scope

The Policy applies to all Councillors of Burwood Council, including the Mayor.

## Statement of Commitment

Burwood 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 (ie their knowledge, skills and attributes) and identify professional development activities to build these capabilities.

## Induction Program

Burwood 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 with 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:

Topic Area	Content
<b>Orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an orientation of Council facilities and the local government area</li> <li>▪ provision of equipment in line with the Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Role of Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The role and responsibilities of local government</li> <li>▪ The guiding principles under the Act that govern Council's functions</li> <li>▪ The purpose of Council and committee meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors and staff under the Act</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The roles and responsibilities of the governing body and individual Councillors under the Act, including in relation to integrated planning and reporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ an overview of the key issues and tasks for the new Council including Council's Burwood2030 Community Strategic Plan, delivery program, operational plan, resourcing strategy and community engagement plan</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The roles and responsibilities of the Mayor as leader of the governing body, including oversight of the General Manager</li> <li>▪ Council's Organisational Structure</li> <li>▪ The strategic nature of the roles of elected members compared to the operational roles of the General Manager and Council Officers</li> <li>▪ The regional and other bodies the Council is a member of and the roles of those bodies</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Panel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The roles and responsibilities of Planning Panels</li> </ul>
<b>Legal and ethical responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Requirement to take an oath of office</li> <li>▪ Requirement to meet the ethical standards prescribed under the Act and Council's Code of Conduct, including managing pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests</li> <li>▪ Outline of the legal responsibilities of Councillors under the Act and their personal responsibilities under other legislation, for example in relation</li> </ul>

Topic Area	Content
	<p>to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ work health and safety</li> <li>○ anti-discrimination</li> <li>○ privacy</li> <li>○ public access to information</li> <li>○ record keeping and records management</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Outline of any Council policies that Councillors will be expected to comply with, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Councillors' Access to Information and Interaction with Council Officers Policy</li> <li>○ Councillor Induction, Briefings and Workshop Policy</li> <li>○ Councillor Induction and Professional Development Policy</li> <li>○ Code of Meeting Practice</li> <li>○ Code of Conduct</li> <li>○ Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy</li> <li>○ Conflicts of Interest Policy</li> <li>○ Gifts and Benefits Policy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Skills and Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ skills and personal attributes needed to perform the roles of a Councillor or Mayor</li> <li>▪ outline of the additional knowledge, skills and personal attributes required by the Mayor</li> </ul>
<b>Time Commitment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participation in Council's Councillor induction program</li> <li>▪ Participation in the Mayor's supplementary induction program</li> <li>▪ Expected attendance at Council Meetings, including meeting days, times, frequency and possible duration</li> <li>▪ Preparation required for Council Meetings, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ attending pre-meeting briefings</li> <li>○ reading business papers</li> <li>○ ensuring Councillors have a full understanding of issues requiring decisions</li> <li>○ Potential participation in other meetings, for example extraordinary Council Meetings, regional bodies, external bodies</li> <li>○ Potential attendance at community events, ceremonies and other functions</li> <li>○ Responding to media requests and inquiries</li> <li>○ Potential participation in formal community consultation processes</li> <li>○ Answering letters, emails and phone calls from residents and ratepayers as well as participating in regular informal conversations</li> <li>○ Participation in any other activities that are likely to arise and require the Mayor or Councillors' time</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Support available to assist Councillors in the role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The annual fees paid to Councillors and the Mayor</li> <li>▪ Council's expenses and facilities policy</li> <li>▪ Council's induction and professional development program for Councillors and the Mayor</li> <li>▪ The responsibility of the General Manager and Council Officers to provide timely information and advice and the administrative and professional support necessary for Councillors to effectively discharge their functions</li> </ul>
<b>Ways to gain further understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attendance at a Council meeting/s or Council committee meeting/s to observe Council decision making and meeting practice</li> <li>▪ NSW Electoral Commission website and other educational materials</li> </ul>

Topic Area	Content
<b>Mayoral</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ how to be an effective leader of the governing body and the Council</li> <li>▪ the role of the Chair and how to chair Council Meetings</li> <li>▪ the Mayor's role in integrated planning and reporting</li> <li>▪ the Mayor's role and responsibilities under the Code of Conduct</li> <li>▪ the Mayor's role and responsibilities in relation to the General Manager's employment</li> <li>▪ the Mayor's role at regional and other representative bodies</li> <li>▪ the Mayor's civic and ceremonial role</li> </ul>

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 the Mayor 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
- 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
- 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.

Burwood Council will evaluate the Burwood 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.

### **Ongoing Professional Development Program**

An individual ongoing professional development plan will be developed for the Mayor and each Councillor to address and provide up skilling opportunities (ie the knowledge, skills and attributes) 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 Council's Councillors' 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.

### **Responsibilities**

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.

The Manager Governance is responsible for planning, scheduling and facilitating induction and professional development activities for the Mayor and Councillors in consultation with the General Manager.

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

### **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 budget will be included as part of the Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy.

### **Approval of Training and/or Expenses**

Professional development activities that require Council funds are to be approved by the Manager Governance in accordance with Burwood Council's Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy.

### **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.

### **Reporting**

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

### **Related Information/Glossary**

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Possible matters to consider:

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Local Government (General) Regulations 2005*
- Office of Local Government – Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines (Section 23A of the Act)
- Councillors' Expenses and Facilities Policy

### **Review**

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The Policy will be reviewed every four years.

### **Contact**

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Manager Governance on 9911 9910