

Strathbogie Shire Council

Councillor Professional Development Policy

December 2025



Contents

COUNCILLOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY	2
PART 1 POLICY	3
1. PURPOSE	3
2. INTRODUCTION	3
3. APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY	3
5. MAYORAL INDUCTION PROGRAM	4
6. MANDATORY CANDIDATE TRAINING	4
7. CANDIDATE SUPPORT PROGRAM	4
8. COUNCILLOR INDUCTION PROGRAM	5
9. REGULAR COUNCILLOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.....	5
10. RESOURCING COUNCILLOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	6
11. COUNCILLOR PARTICIPATION	6
12. CERTIFICATION	6
13. ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES	7
14. RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION	7
15. POLICY REVIEW	7
16. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006 AND THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT 2010	7

Councillor Professional Development Policy

Document ID:	SSCEDOC-43802981-63
Effective Date:	9 December 2025
Last Review:	New
Current Review:	November 2025
Date Adopted by Council:	9 December 2025
Next Scheduled Review Date:	November 2027
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer

PART 1 POLICY

1. PURPOSE

To set out the arrangements for supporting councillor professional development and compliance with the induction and professional development obligations of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

To strengthen good governance across councils through high quality learning and development programs for councillors

To encourage the professional leadership development of councillors and improve individual knowledge and skills.

2. INTRODUCTION

Councils benefit from ensuring councillors are well trained in their legislative obligations, principles of good governance, compliance with codes of conduct, conflicts of interest and other transparency disclosures and accountabilities.

Councillor professional development commences prior to nomination and continues throughout the four-year term as an elected representative, with a combination of mandatory training prescribed by legislation and discretionary training identified as necessary to the council or councillor.

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires that all councillors undertake candidate training prior to election (s256(7)), induction training upon their election (see s32) and ongoing professional development training throughout their term (see s33A). Further, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are required to undertake additional training upon their appointment to that role (see s27A).

The Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 prescribe the matters that must be included in this training.

For the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, the prescribed matters are:

- roles and responsibilities;
- chairing meetings;
- engagement and advocacy;
- leadership; and
- any other matter relating to the role of the mayor which the chief executive officer has determined should be addressed.

For all councillors (for both induction and ongoing professional development), the prescribed matters are:

- working together in a council
- decision making, integrity and accountability
- community representation
- strategic planning and financial management
- conduct
- land use planning
- any other matter relating to the role of a councillor which the Chief Executive Officer has determined should be addressed.

3. APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This policy applies to all Councillors of Strathbogie Shire Council.

4. DEFINITIONS

In this policy:

- candidate support program means a program of preliminary training designed to educate potential local government candidates about council election processes, local government legislative and policy fundamentals and life as a councillor.
- councillor induction program means the program of professional development activities provided to all councillors upon election
- councillor professional development program means the program of professional development activities provided annually to all councillors
- mayoral induction program means the program of professional development activities provided to the mayor and deputy mayor.
- training certification statement means the statement prepared by the chief executive officer and presented to councillors for signing
- training program means the mayoral induction program, councillor induction program and/or councillor professional development program.

5. MAYORAL INDUCTION PROGRAM

Upon election to the office of Mayor or Deputy Mayor, the Chief Executive Officer shall provide the mayor and deputy mayor with a program of professional development activities which, if completed within four months of taking the oath or affirmation, will satisfy each councillor's obligation under section 27A(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The mayoral induction program may be the same for both councillors, or may differ between councillors depending on identified learning needs.

The mayoral induction program is subject to change and may be altered by the Chief Executive Officer with reasonable notice provided to councillors.

Participation in the mayoral induction program is mandatory for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

6. MANDATORY CANDIDATE TRAINING

Prior to the opening of nominations for local council elections, the Chief Executive Officer will ensure information is provided on the council website about the process of nomination for election as a councillor, including the requirement all candidates undertake mandatory candidate training prior to nomination.

The completion of mandatory candidate training is a prescribed requirement under s 256(7) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

7. CANDIDATE SUPPORT PROGRAM

Councils may provide a candidate support program to assist new and potential candidates in developing an introductory understanding of the following matters:

- The local government election process
- Processes and procedures of nomination
- Local government legislative and policy fundamentals
- Codes of Conduct and other forms of accountability
- Professional Development Mandatory Training requirements
- Day to day life as a councillor

Councils may determine that to encourage candidate diversity and inclusion, that special measures are taken to provide tailored candidate support training to people under-represented on councils including but not limited to:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people
- LGBTIQA+ people
- People with Disabilities
- Women and non-binary people
- Young people

8. COUNCILLOR INDUCTION PROGRAM

Upon election, the Chief Executive Officer shall provide all councillors with a program of professional development activities which, if completed within four months of taking the oath or affirmation, will satisfy each councillor's obligation under section 32(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The councillor induction program may be the same for all councillors or may differ between councillors depending on identified learning needs.

The councillor induction program is subject to change and may be altered by the Chief Executive Officer with reasonable notice provided to councillors.

Participation in the councillor induction program is mandatory.

9. REGULAR COUNCILLOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Early in each calendar year, the Chief Executive Officer shall provide all councillors with a program of professional development activities which, if completed during that calendar year, will satisfy each councillor's obligation under section 33A(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The councillor professional development program must include:

- Any training that is outlined under the Act as mandatory
- At the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer any additional professional development training or activities that they determine to be relevant and important to the professional development needs of their individual council
- training on the matters prescribed at r6A(a) to (f) of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020, and
- any matters determined by the Chief Executive Officer under r6A(g) of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020.

The councillor professional development program may be delivered by:

- in-house training to a councillor group (by an external subject matter expert, training provider or by a council officer who is a subject matter expert in that area)
- completion of online training modules
- self-directed learning by way of webinars, videos, podcasts or similar
- attendance at an external training event, seminar or conference
- completion of a recognised qualification and/or
- other activities deemed suitable by the Chief Executive Officer.

The councillor professional development program may be the same for all councillors or

may differ between councillors depending on identified learning needs.

The councillor professional development program is subject to change and may be altered by the Chief Executive Officer with reasonable notice provided to councillors.

10. RESOURCING COUNCILLOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The councillor professional development plan will be funded within the council's annually adopted Budget.

11. COUNCILLOR PARTICIPATION

Participation by councillors in the mayoral induction program, councillor induction program and councillor professional development program is required to satisfy sections 27A(1), 32(1) and 33A(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* respectively. Every effort shall be made by councillors to participate in the training programs.

The Chief Executive Officer must provide reasonable assistance to a councillor to enable them to access the training programs.

Councillors shall notify the Chief Executive Officer without delay if they are unable to participate in any component of the training programs. The Chief Executive Officer will, to the extent practicable, make alternative arrangements to enable the training program to be completed (for example, by arranging a make-up training session to be offered to that councillor).

12. CERTIFICATION

Following each training program, the Chief Executive Officer will prepare a training certification statement which sets out the training undertaken by each councillor during that calendar year. The statement shall include for each element of the training program:

- the date(s) the training was undertaken
- the prescribed matters included, with reference to regulation 4A, 6 or 6A(2) of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020
- the detailed matters addressed and
- the manner of delivery.

If the training certification statement shows that all required elements have been completed, it shall be presented to each councillor for certification. The councillor must then make a written declaration that they have completed the training program by signing and dating the training certification statement in the presence of the Chief Executive Officer.

If the training certification statement shows that not all required elements have been completed, it may not be presented to the councillor for certification until such time as the outstanding elements are completed.

If a councillor fails to make the written declaration by:

- for the councillor induction program, four months from the taking of the oath or affirmation of office (subject to s32(4A) of the *Local Government Act 2020*)
- for the mayoral induction program, one month from election as Mayor or Deputy Mayor
- for the councillor professional development program, 31 December each year except for an election year when it must be completed by 1 September (subject to s33A(6) of the *Local Government Act 2020*)

The Chief Executive Officer shall withhold the payment of the Mayoral, Deputy Mayoral or councillor allowance (until such time as both the training program has been completed and the written declaration has been made.)

The failure to make the written declaration by the deadline for any of the applicable training programs results in the withholding of the entire mayoral, deputy mayoral or councillor allowance (ie.– a mayor who fails to complete the mayoral induction declaration but does complete the councillor induction and councillor professional development declarations will have their full allowance withheld – they do not ‘revert’ to receiving the councillor allowance.

Upon the completion of the training program and the making of the declaration, payment of allowances shall resume, and any amounts withheld shall be paid.

13. ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities
Chief Executive Officer	is the owner of policy
Director People and Governance	provides advice and administration of this policy

14. RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

The following Council, State, regional and national plans, and policies are relevant to this policy under each subtitle.

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- Council Expenses Policy
- Model Councillor Code of Conduct

15. POLICY REVIEW

Council may review this policy at any time and at least two years from the date of adoption.

Minor amendments to the policy may be authorised by the Chief Executive Officer at any time where such changes do not alter the substance of the policy (e.g. a change to the name of a related document, or a change in legislation).

16. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006 AND THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT 2010

The Council acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to twenty fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality, and dignity.