Policy M5 – Council Members Continuing Professional Development

Policy Intent

To ensure Council Members meet and comply with the prescribed professional development requirements, under *Local Government Act 1995* (**Act**) and to further encourage participation in other conferences or training specifically designed to enhance skills and knowledge relating to roles and responsibilities as a Council Member of the Shire of Murray (**Shire**).

Policy Statement

1. Council Member Essentials Training

In accordance with the Act, Council Members are to undertake and successfully complete the following prescribed professional development training modules titled *"Council Member Essentials"* within the period of 12 months from the day the Council Member was elected, unless a prescribed exemption applies:

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

2. Professional Development

Council Members are encouraged to nominate to attend other conferences or training opportunities, to enhance and broaden their knowledge of local government issues to support the community.

The following are examples of other conferences or training opportunities, (the usual number of delegates is shown in parentheses, if applicable):

- National General Assembly of Local Government (the Shire President and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO);
- Annual WALGA Local Government Convention;
- One off conferences sponsored by WALGA or the Department of Local Government on important local government issues;
- Annual conferences of major professions of Local Government;
- Annual Road Congress;
- Conferences which advance the development of Council Elected Members in their role as a Council Member; and
- Conferences of organisations on which a Council Member has been elected or appointed as a delegate.

Council may authorise attendance at other conferences or training opportunities, by more than the number of specified delegates, if a particular purpose or need arises.

Council Members are limited to attending three other conferences or training opportunities, each financial year, unless authorised by Council. No more than two Council Members may attend the same conference other than WALGA Local Government Convention.

Requests to attend other conferences or training opportunities, are to be initiated by the Council Member and are to be forwarded to the CEO, prior to enrolment or registration.

The Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**) is authorised to approve requests from Council Members for attendance at other conferences, or training opportunities, providing that:

- the cost does not exceed $3,000 for any single instance, and up to a total of
- $4,000 in any 12-month period (financial year); and
- the other conference or training, is organised by an identified industry-recognised training provider.

The CEO is authorised to expend funds on prescribed professional development training for Council Members to meet statutory obligations.

1.2 Travel Arrangements

All booking arrangements for other conferences or training for Council Members are coordinated through the CEO's Office. Council Members should note the Act precludes a Council Member to pre-spend Shire funds.

Any airline travel for a Council Member is to be booked at economy level and booking arrangements are to be reviewed upon any improved discount offer being identified. Any upgrade to Business Class is permissible provided the Council Member funds the difference in cost.

Other than to amend departure times, tickets provided to Council Members shall not be exchanged, downgraded or rebated. Tickets or bookings may not be altered to include personal travel that is not part of the scheduled conference itinerary.

The proposed duration of the other conference or training attendance together with travel time and planned supplementary pre or post conference activities relevant to the Shire will be notified to Council or the CEO for confirmation and/or amendment prior to the delegate's departure for the other conference or training.

1.3 Expenses

Expenses relating to other conferences or training, as approved, will be paid direct by the Shire. Expenses may include the following items:

- air fare;
- travel insurance;
- conference registration;
- copy of conference proceedings;
- room accommodation;
- reasonable phone utilisation;

- reasonable laundry expenses; and
- meals in the hotel where registered, if these are not provided during the course of the conference.

Incidental expenses include:

- phone calls made outside the accommodation premises and for the purposes of the conference and/or Council business;
- travel to and from the conference venue; and
- travel to and from all airport destinations.

In circumstances where entertainment on behalf of the Shire is expected or otherwise appropriate, the entertainment will be in accordance with guidelines established, from time to time, by the CEO and as determined by the judgement of the delegate, paid by the delegate, and presented to the CEO for subsequent authorisation for reimbursement upon return.

For other conferences or training that are one day or less duration, the previous night's accommodation is available subject to approval by the CEO. No advance is payable and any expenses incurred may be reimbursed on production of sufficient documentation.

All costs associated for prescribed professional development training, including travel, accommodation, meals and incidentals will be fully funded by the Shire.

Payment or reimbursement of professional development costs cannot be made within three (3) months of a Council Members term ending; or following notification of a Council Members resignation; or during a period of suspension under Part 8 of the Act.

1.4 Cash Advances

An advance of $200 may be made available upon request to the CEO to cover meals not included at other conferences or training, or at prescribed professional development training. Alternatively, delegates at other conferences or training, or attendees at prescribed training may elect to pay other expenses themselves and claim reimbursement from the Shire on presentation of the receipts.

Advances for expenses will be made no earlier than two weeks prior to the date of the commencement day of the other conferences or training or prescribed professional development training. Expenditure reconciliation statements will be required within 14 days of return from the Conference.

1.5 Council Member/Delegate Accompanying Person

Where a Council Member or Shire officer is accompanied to other conferences or training, all costs for/or incurred by the accompanying person are to be borne by the Council Member, or Shire officer, or accompanying person and not by the Shire.

The exception to the above being the cost of attending any official event dinner where partners would normally attend. An example of an official event is the WALGA Local Government Convention Gala dinner or 'sundowner' drinks at the event opening.

1.6 Reporting and Publishing

(a) All Council Members attending any other conference or training are expected to report to Council on the benefits achieved by attending and should make the conference papers available to other Council Members.

If a report is not received within 30 days, the Council Member may be ineligible for attendance at further conferences or training until the report is received.

A record of conferences or other training attended by Council Members will be maintained by the CEO.

(b) In accordance with the Act, the CEO is to prepare and publish a report each financial year on all professional development training completed by Council Members in the financial year. This report is published on the Shire's website and updated on a monthly basis or as training has been completed..

Note: All monetary amounts where specified are Good and Service Tax (GST) exclusive.

Legislation

Local Government Act 1995, Section 5.126-5.129

Policy Detail		
Responsible Directorate	Office of the CEO	
Responsible Department	Governance	
Responsible Officer	Manager Governance	
Next Policy Review / Schedule	2027 – (2-yearly following election)	
Council Adoption	**Date / Resolution**	30 June 2011 (OCM11/099)
Amendment Record	**Date / Resolution**	28 February 2013 (OCM13/019)
		26 September 2013 (OCM13/163)
		25 June 2015 (OCM15/155)
		22 February 2018 (OCM18/008)
		19 December 2019 (OCM19/269)
		25 November 2021 (OCM21/187)
		23 June 2022 (OCM22/070)
		19 December 2024 (OCM24/159)
		18 December 2025 (OCM25/159)