



Council Policy

Councillor Professional Development Policy

Department/Unit	Governance & Risk	First Implemented	16 September 2025	Review Date	September 2029
Origin	Manager People, Communications & Governance	Reviewed	-	Version	1
Authorising Officer	Endorsement by Council	Effective From	16 September 2025	Records Reference	E1533

Purpose/Objective

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

This policy aims to strengthen good governance through high quality learning and development programs for Councillors and encourages the professional leadership development of Mansfield Shire Councillors to improve individual knowledge and skills.

Policy Statement

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 upon election 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.

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) requires that all Councillors undertake induction training upon their election and ongoing professional development training throughout their four-year term. Further, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are required to undertake additional training upon their appointment to that role.

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

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

Mansfield Shire Council | Councillor Professional Development Policy

- a) roles and responsibilities;
- b) chairing meetings;
- c) engagement and advocacy;
- d) leadership; and
- e) 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:

- a) working together in a council;
- b) decision making, integrity and accountability;
- c) community representation;
- d) strategic planning and financial management;
- e) conduct;
- f) land use planning;
- g) any other matter relating to the role of a Councillor which the Chief Executive Officer has determined should be addressed.

Definitions

Term	Definition
CEO	Mansfield Shire Council Chief Executive Officer
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.
The Act	<i>Local Government Act 2020</i>
The Regulations	<i>Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020</i>
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.

Mayoral Induction Program

Within one month of their election to the office of Mayor or Deputy Mayor, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will ensure that Mayoral training is provided, as prescribed by the Regulations, to meet obligations under section 27A of the Act. In the case of an Acting Mayor this will be provided within one month of their appointment.

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 CEO with reasonable notice provided to Councillors.

Participation in the Mayoral Induction Program is mandatory for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Councillor Induction Program

Upon election, the CEO will provide all Councillors with a Councillor Induction Program of professional development activities which, if completed within four months of taking the oath or affirmation of office, will meet each Councillor's obligation under section 32(1) of the Act.

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 CEO with reasonable notice provided to Councillors.

Participation in the Councillor Induction Program is mandatory.

Councillor Professional Development Program

The CEO will provide all Councillors with an annual program of professional development, if completed during that calendar year (in the year of a general election, 1 September; or in any other year, 31 December), will satisfy each Councillor's obligation under section 33A(1) of the Act.

The Councillor Professional Development Program must include:

- a) Any training that is outlined under the Act as mandatory.
- b) At the discretion of the CEO any additional professional development training or activities that they determine to be relevant and important to the professional development needs of their individual council.

The Councillor Professional Development Program must include training on the matters prescribed by the Regulations; and Any matters determined by the CEO under the Regulations.

The Councillor Professional Development Program may be delivered by:

- a) 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);
- b) completion of online training modules;

- c) self-directed learning by way of webinars, videos, podcasts or similar.
- d) attendance at an external training event, seminar or conference;
- e) completion of a recognised qualification; and/or
- f) other activities deemed suitable by the CEO.
- g) The Councillor Professional Development Program may be the same for all Councillors or may differ between Councillors depending on identified learning needs.
- h) The Councillor Professional Development Program is subject to change and may be altered by the CEO with reasonable notice provided to councillors.

Program Development

The Councillor Professional Development Program will be developed annually by the CEO in collaboration with Councillors. This may include consultation via surveys, workshops or individual discussions to identify learning needs, role-specific development priorities and preferred modes of delivery.

The content and structure of the program will be guided by the Checklist of the Content for Induction and Professional Development Training from Appendix C of the Local Government Victoria's '*Guidance on the mandatory training for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors*'. This ensures the program meets all mandatory requirements and incorporates best practices for local government training.

Resourcing Professional Development

Councillor professional development will be funded within the council's annually adopted Budget. Costs may include fees for facilitators, travel, accommodation, course materials and digital platforms, where applicable. Facilitators/training providers will be selected in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy.

Councillor Participation

Participation by Councillors in the Mayoral Induction Program (where they have been elected as Mayor or Deputy Mayor), Councillor Induction Program and Councillor Professional Development Program is required under sections 27A(1), 32(1) and 33A(1) of the Act. Every effort shall be made by Councillors to participate in the training programs.

The CEO will provide reasonable assistance to Councillors to enable them to access the training programs.

Councillors shall notify the CEO without delay if they are unable to participate in any component of the training programs. The CEO 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).

Certification

Following each training program the CEO 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:

- a) the date(s) the training was undertaken;
- b) the prescribed matters included, with reference to regulation 4A, 6 or 6A(A) of the Regulations;
- c) the detailed matters addressed; and
- d) 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 CEO.

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:

- a) 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);
- b) for the Mayoral induction program, one month from election as Mayor or Deputy Mayor; or
- c) 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);

In accordance with the Act the CEO 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 (e.g. 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 payment of allowances shall resume and any amounts withheld shall be paid.

Reporting and Transparency

Expenses for Council as a whole related to deliver the Councillor Professional Development Program will be reported annually in Council’s Annual Report of Operations. In the year of a newly elected Council the cost of the Councillor Induction Program will also be reported.

A list of Councillors who have submitted a written declaration confirming completion of the training program will be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee at its first meeting of the calendar year, covering the Professional Development Program delivered in the previous year.

Scope

This policy applies to all elected Mansfield Shire Councillors.

Responsibilities

Councillors

- ▶ Attend and actively participate in all mandatory professional development training as required under the Act.
- ▶ Demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement and the effective performance of their role.
- ▶ Maintain records of completion of professional development activities, where applicable.
- ▶ Apply learnings from training to their governance and decision-making responsibilities.

Chief Executive Officer

- ▶ Ensure all Councillors are informed of their obligations under the Act regarding mandatory professional development.
- ▶ Consult with Councillors to identify training priorities, learning needs and preferences as part of developing the annual Professional Development Program.
- ▶ Facilitate access to appropriate and timely training sessions that meet the standards set out by the Act.
- ▶ Facilitate collaboration with Councillors in the development of the annual Professional Development Program to ensure training is relevant, timely and aligned with individual and collective learning needs.
- ▶ Maintain an accurate record of Councillor training activities.
- ▶ Promote a culture of continuous learning and professional development among Councillors to enhance governance and leadership capacity.
- ▶ Overall responsibility for the application of this Policy.

The CEO may delegate elements of training administration, including record-keeping and reporting, to the Governance and Risk Department or other appropriate officers.

Governance and Risk Department

- ▶ Coordinate scheduling, logistics and communication related to training sessions.
- ▶ Develop and maintain a professional development calendar to support long-term planning.
- ▶ Liaise with training providers to ensure delivery aligns with Council needs and legislative requirements.

Mansfield Shire Council | **Councillor Professional Development Policy**

- ▶ Support Councillors in accessing training resources.
- ▶ Report annually to the Audit and Risk Committee Councillors who successfully completed their Professional Development Program.
- ▶ Ensure this Policy is reviewed regularly and updated to reflect changes in legislation or best practice.

The Governance and Risk Department is the owner of this policy. Any reviews of this Policy must be made in consultation with the Coordinator Governance & Risk.

References / Related Policies

- ▶ *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020*
- ▶ *Local Government Act 2020*
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Council Expenses Policy
- ▶ Mansfield Shire Council Procurement Policy
- ▶ Model Councillor Code of Conduct
- ▶ Local Government Victoria's 'Guidance on the mandatory training for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors'

Gender Impact Assessment

The Councillor Professional Development Policy has considered the Gender Equality Act 2020 in its preparation but is not relevant to its content. The Policy has been assessed as not requiring a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) as it is purely administrative in nature and does not benefit any one gender group over any other.

Implementation

This Policy is effective from 16 September 2025.

Review Date

This Policy is to be reviewed by September 2029.

Authorisation to Implement Policy

Signed: _____

Councillor

Witnessed: _____

Chief Executive Officer

Approval dated: 16 September 2025

Mansfield Shire Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this Policy at any time.

Appendix A: Written Declaration on Completion of [Mayoral / Councillor Induction / Professional Development] Training

I, Cr [First name Last name], hereby declare that I have completed the mandatory [Mayoral / Councillor induction / professional development] training within [one month of being elected as Mayor / Deputy Mayor / four months of having taken the oath / affirmation of office / the prescribed timelines for professional development training] on [date].

Attached is a record of completed training activities which demonstrates that I have completed the mandatory [Mayoral / Councillor induction / professional development] training as required.

Councillor Signature:

Date:

I, [First Name Last Name], Chief Executive Officer of Mansfield Shire Council, confirm that I have witnessed the making of this declaration.

CEO Signature:

Date:

Record of completed training activities for Mayoral training

Councillor name:					
Training matter	Date <i>(Activities must be completed within one month of being elected to the role)</i>	Activity description / title <i>(Course title)</i>	Activity format <i>(Such as Workshop, seminar, conference, course, etc.)</i>	Activity provider <i>(If relevant)</i>	Supporting evidence to support completion <i>(Enrolment record, receipts, attendance records, presentation notes, etc.)</i>
1. Roles and responsibilities					
2. Chairing meetings					
3. Engagement and advocacy					
4. Leadership					
5. Other non-mandatory training					

Record of completed training activities for professional development training

Councillor name:					
Training matter	Date <i>(Activities must be completed within one month of being elected to the role)</i>	Activity description / title <i>(Course title)</i>	Activity format <i>(Such as Workshop, seminar, conference, course, etc.)</i>	Activity provider <i>(If relevant)</i>	Supporting evidence to support completion <i>(Enrolment record, receipts, attendance records, presentation notes, etc.)</i>
1. Working together in a Council					
2. Decision making, integrity and accountability					
3. Community representation					
4. Strategic planning and financial management					
5. Conduct					
6. Land use Planning					
7. Other non-mandatory training					