



ELECTED MEMBER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ALLOWANCE

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|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Type: | Council | | |
| Owner: | Chief Executive Officer | | |
| Responsible Officer: | Manager Governance and Risk | | |
| Approval Date: | 10/12/2024 | Next Review: | 1/10/2025 |
| Records Number: | 177353 | Council/CEO Decision: | Council |
| Legislation Reference: | Section 45 and 106 of the <i>Local Government Act 2019</i> section 7B of the <i>Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act 2006</i> | | |

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to identify the types of training or conferences or training that may be attended or undertaken by a council member using the professional development allowance.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to elected members with Katherine Town Council.

3 DEFINITIONS

Allowance means a benefit, financial, material, or otherwise, payable and/or provided to an Elected Member in accordance with the Local Government Act 2019.

Mandatory Training means training courses for members approved by the Agency, must be about the responsibilities of being a member of council under the Act, and must be completed within 12 months of election.

Professional Development means education, training, or skill development engaged in for career progression. This can range from keeping up to date with changes and trends in local government governance by learning new skills to advance your role.

Reimbursement means repayment, in arrears, with sufficient documentation as required.

4 DETAILS

Council is committed to recognising the most appropriate types of conferences and training opportunities that enable a council member to develop capabilities in the member's role. Professional development for elected members is important to know your governance obligations.

First and foremost, when using social media, councillors should have at the forefront of their mind, the roles and responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 2019*. Importantly, a councillor's role is primarily a strategic one and they should not become involved in the day-to-day operations of the council.

A councillor's role is to represent the collective interests of residents, ratepayers and the local community.

Councillors also have a legal duty to uphold and represent accurately the policies and decisions of the council. This means that where council makes a decision you disagree with (and may have voted against at the council meeting), you must be careful to express this is your personal view and not the decision of council.

Councillors must adhere to the Code of Conduct and any related policies such as a dedicated social media policy. Both place constraints on how social media is used by elected officials and it is likely some new councillors will need to make adjustments to their style and online presence.

It is vital that councillors understand the rules of the Katherine Town Council. Stepping into elected leadership will require elected members to review and likely change the way they operate such as use social media. To make an effective transition from campaigning to governing, elected members will be provided professional development opportunities.

A member of a council is entitled to be paid the professional development allowances determined by the Remuneration Tribunal under section 7B of the *Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act 2006*.

Professional Development Allowance is an inclusive allowance which covers costs associated with the Professional Development activities including registration and attendance fees, travel costs including vehicle, travel allowance and travel time.

Council must publish the amounts of the allowances payable by the council on its website.

TYPES OF CONFERENCE AND TRAINING

The professional development allowance may be expended by approval from the Council, in relation to attending or undertaking the following types of conference and training within the Northern Territory or facilitated online:

- (a) mandatory training relevant to being a council member;
- (b) course of study or other training course relevant to performance as a council member;
- (c) training, mediation or counselling recommended or ordered as part of a decision relating to a Code of Conduct complaint;
- (d) training, mediation or counselling recommended by the Mayor or CEO; or
- (e) a conference, seminar, symposium, expo or other similar event on a topic or function directly related to local government.

Costs for travel, accommodation and meals that are claimed in relation to use of the professional development allowance are to be paid from the council member's professional development allowance.

HIGH-COST TRAINING COURSES

If a council member is attending a training course that exceeds the professional development allowance available in the current financial year:

- (a) any remaining professional development allowance in the current financial year is to be expended to partially pay for the training course; and
- (b) the outstanding cost of the training course may be expended against the professional development

allowance of the council member in future financial years (only within the term of the Council).

Expenditure of the professional development allowance in future financial years will only be done on a reimbursement basis to a council member who has personally paid the remaining cost of the training course.

Access to reimbursement is subject to:

- (a) the council member remaining to be a council member in the future financial year(s) when a claim for reimbursement is made; and
- (b) any changes in the maximum amount of professional development allowance available in the future financial year(s) (which may reduce the reimbursement amount available).

Total amount claimable each year is the total of two years, being based on an annual allowance, plus one year drawn in advance or one years remaining balance from a previous year. The maximum amount claimable by any councillor is the total sum of the one year for each year of the councillors elected term.

Proof of completion for each stage of the course is required before further payments can be claimed.

5 ASSOCIATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

Elected Members Code of Conduct

Reasonable Expenses for Travel and Accommodation by Elected Members Policy

6 REFERENCES AND RELATED LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 2019

Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act 2006

NT Remuneration Tribunal - Determination of Allowances for Members of Local Councils

Revision History

| Version | Approval date | Details of change | Responsible officer |
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| 1 | 26/10/2021 | Created | CEO |
| 2 | 10/12/2024 | Reviewed, transferred to updated policy template, inclusion of Remuneration Tribunal Determination, amended approval to be the Council not the Mayor or CEO as per the determination, inclusion of clearer explanation of the link between the role and professional development to enable an elected member to enhance skills in governance obligations. | Manager Governance and Risk |
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