

1. Purpose and Intent

Council recognises the importance of appropriate training and professional development to support and assist Councillors in the effective performance of their **official duties and functions**. Councillors are encouraged to undertake appropriate training and professional development during their term in office.

This Policy provides:

- Councillors with support to undertake appropriate and approved professional development opportunities to assist and support them to undertake and effectively fulfil their roles and responsibilities as Councillors as set out in the Local Government Act 2020 (Act), increase their understanding of the issues faced in local government and network with Councillors and Officers from other Councils;
- A framework for funding, approving, monitoring and accounting for training undertaken by Councillors;
- Fairness, equity and consistency in the provision of and access to training and development opportunities;
- Assurance that funding for professional development is used for approved training and development purposes only; and
- Transparency in, and accountability for expenditure on Councillor training and development.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all Councillors.

3. Definitions

<i>CFO or delegate</i>	means the Chief Financial Officer of Council, or another Council officer who has been given the responsibility for performing the particular duty or function on the CFO's behalf. The delegate must have an appropriate level of training relevant to the performance of the duty or function.
<i>Council</i>	means Frankston City Council.
<i>Council business</i>	means activities and matters relevant to Council's objectives, role and functions, as described in the Local government charter (Part 1A of the Act). It includes the performance of official duties and functions .

Council term	means the term of office of a Councillor.
Formal study	means training or education provided by a recognised tertiary education provider that leads to a formal qualification that is relevant to the Councillor’s performance of their role as a Councillor or as Mayor.
Official duties and functions	means activities consistent with the role of a Councillor as defined in s.65 of the Act. It includes Council business , civic and statutory duties and activities conducted on behalf of Council to further the achievement of Council’s objectives. Examples include preparing for, attending and participating in Council meetings, Councillor briefings, committee meetings, workshops and inspections; attending civic functions, representing Council at ceremonies and community events where formally invited as Councillor to undertake an official duty; attending public meetings, annual meetings or presentation dinners where invited as a Councillor; and attending meetings of community groups where invited to speak about Council programs or initiatives; private meetings with residents, ratepayers, community groups, developers etc, where arranged through official Council channels and details of discussions are documented in official records or diaries.
Out of pocket expenses	means expenses that have been met by the Councillor using their own funds, which may later be reimbursed.
Professional Development Allowance (‘PDA’)	means an allocation made in the Council’s annual budget to meet the costs of Councillors’ Professional Development, in accordance with this Policy. Each Councillor is entitled to an equal share of the PDA.
Reasonable	in relation to expenses and costs, means expenses and costs incurred in performing official duties and functions or Council business which, in amount and nature, are consistent with public expectations. When determining whether an expense or cost is reasonable , relevant factors will include whether the expense or cost is necessary, cost-conscious and capable of withstanding public scrutiny.

4. Authorisation

This Policy is managed by the Governance and Information Department, and is approved by Frankston City’s Mayor and Council’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO):

Mayor, Frankston City

CEO, Frankston City Council

in accordance with Frankston City Council resolution at its Council Meeting of 19 July 2021.

5. Policy

5.1 Councillor Professional Development Allocation

- 5.1.1 Council will provide Corporate training or development opportunities for all Councillors, including (but not limited to):
- Induction – a structured program of training and information at the commencement of each new Council term, which may include attendance at approved industry conferences and seminars; and
 - Statutory obligations and responsibilities as a Councillor – the legal framework within which local government operates.
- 5.1.2 Approved Corporate training provided for all Councillors in accordance with clause 5.1.1, is in addition to the training and development budget as set out in clause 5.1.3.
- 5.1.3 A specific Councillor training and development allocation may be made in the Council's annual budget, to meet the costs of Councillor's Professional Development, in accordance with this Policy.
- 5.1.4 An annual budget allocation of \$3,000 per Councillor will be provided or \$12,000 per Councillor for the term of office.
- 5.1.5 Each Councillor will be entitled to an annual Professional Development Allowance (PDA) equivalent to an equal share of the annual training and development budget.
- 5.1.6 The PDA must only be used for participation in approved study and training courses relevant to the role of a Councillor which provide a significant professional development opportunity to the benefit of Council and support and assist Councillors to effectively fulfil their responsibilities as Councillors.
- 5.1.7 Subject to this Policy, the PDA may be used for:
- Attendance at recognised and industry approved conferences, seminars or events (refer to Appendix A for industry approved conferences, seminars, training or events that Councillors may want to consider attending during term)
 - Individual training, coaching or mentoring
 - Other approved training and development.
- 5.1.8 The PDA may also be used to pay for **reasonable** costs relating to attending or participating in approved training or development, including:
- Travel and transport
 - Accommodation
 - Meals and other necessary out of pocket expenses.

5.1.9 Any travel to participate in training or development activities outside of the state of Victoria must be approved by resolution of Council and formally recorded in the Register of Overseas and Interstate Travel, as required by Reg.12(a) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2015.

5.1.10 Use of the PDA is subject to the following conditions:

- The PDA is not transferable between Councillors and cannot be used for other purposes;
- An application for a Councillor to spend more than the annual PDA allocation (currently \$3,000) in any single year, must be approved by a resolution of Council after consideration of a written submission from the Councillor requesting approval of the additional expenditure;
- Councillors cannot attend any PDA within the last 6 months of their term;
- All providers used must be approved, accredited and registered with an appropriate body or association
- No Councillor may spend more than the total projected PDA budget for their term of office (currently \$12,000) on their personal professional development in each term of office i.e. in any four (4) year period
- Councillors must not personally pay for any training or development and seek reimbursement of expenditure. All training providers are required to invoice Council and will be paid by Council following confirmation that the requirements for accreditation and registration have been met.

5.2 MAV 'Credit points'

5.2.1 Council accrues 'credit points' from training undertaken through the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV). Allocation of the accrued 'credit points' will be on equal share basis for each Councillor at the start of each year of the Council term.

5.2.2 At the start of each year of the Council term the Manager Governance and Information and/or Manager People and Culture will provide advice to Council on the allocation of 'credit points' available to each Councillor.

5.2.3 'Credit points' may be used to supplement the PDA for any Councillor for any training undertaken through the MAV.

5.2.4 Councillors may not re-allocate any 'credit points' to another Councillor or use them for any purpose other than training and development.

5.2.5 Any accrued 'credit points' at the end of a Council term will carry over to the next Council term, for use by incoming Councillors.

5.3 Formal Study

5.3.1 A Councillor may undertake **formal study** relevant to the role of the Mayor or Councillor, subject to this Policy.

5.3.2 Participation in any **formal study** must be approved by Council resolution, subject to the following conditions and considerations:

Conditions

- The course must be directly relevant to the role of a Councillor or Mayor
- The course must be formally recognised and accredited
- The provider must be a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and must hold appropriate professional accreditation and/or memberships etc.

Considerations

- The indirect costs associated with and additional to the cost of enrolment in the course (e.g. location, accommodation, travel etc.)
- The status of the qualification obtained, if applicable
- Any Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements e.g. whether the course has mandatory CPD requirements to maintain the status of the qualification
- The potential for the training to be used for personal gain, future employment or income-earning opportunities.

5.3.3 The Manager Governance and Information and/or Manager People and Culture will provide advice on any **formal study** proposed to be undertaken by a Councillor.

5.3.4 Where a course extends beyond the Councillor's term of office, Council will only pay the fees and associated costs relating to the current term of office.

5.3.5 Councillors are required to provide appropriate evidence of attendance at and the successful completion of each unit of study.

5.3.6 Failure to attend or to pass any required examinations or assignments will result in the termination of Council payment for the study i.e. Council will not pay for a Councillor to repeat a unit or part of a course.

5.3.7 Course or tuition fees may be paid by Council up-front, subject to a resolution of Council.

5.3.8 Such payment must be refunded to Council in the event that the Councillor fails to complete a required unit or course of study, unless there are mitigating circumstances which are accepted and approved by the Mayor and the CEO.

5.4 Conferences, Seminars, Events and Training Courses

5.4.1 Where a Councillor is attending a conference, seminar or event as an authorised representative of Council, Council will:

- pay the registration fees on registration of the Councillor
- reimburse or pay all **reasonable expenses** for travel, transport, accommodation, meals and other necessary associated **out of pocket expenses** on production of appropriate tax invoices.

The costs of such authorised attendance are not part of and are additional to the Councillor's PDA.

5.4.2 Council will not reimburse personal expenditure by Councillors on alcohol. Reimbursement of expenses is covered by the Council Expenses Policy.

5.4.3 Councillors' attendance at conferences, seminars, events and training within the state of Victoria must be approved by the CFO, or as determined by Council, in order for reimbursement of associated expenses to be claimable. Councillors must complete the form in Appendix 2 to facilitate participation in professional development.

5.4.4 Councillors' attendance at conferences, seminars, events and training outside the state of Victoria is subject to prior approval by Council after consideration of an officer's report.

5.4.5 Matters relevant to the approval of a Councillor's attendance at a particular conference, seminar, event or training course are:

- (i) course topic, content, location, date and duration
- (ii) relevance of conference to **Council business** and the Councillor's personal development requirements
- (iii) analysis of the costs including the course, course material, travel and accommodation for the Councillor
- (iv) benefits expected to result from attendance.

5.4.6 Where overnight accommodation is required, the CFO or delegate, or as determined by **Council**, will arrange booking and payment for a Councillor's accommodation at the conference hotel (or appropriate nearby venue, in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy, if the cost is less than that promoted by the conference organiser).

5.4.7 After attending a conference, seminar, event or training course, a Councillor is required to provide a written summary to Council, which outlines:

- the purpose of the conference
- learning objectives and outcomes
- matters of relevance to the Frankston municipality
- issues for consideration by Council
- any recommendations or actions.

5.5 Procurement

Expenditure under this Policy will comply with Council's Procurement Policy and Guidelines, as relevant and applicable.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Councillors will:

- Undertake agreed and approved training, including general training as set out in this Policy;
- Be required to complete the form in Appendix 2 to facilitate participation in professional development;
- Not personally pay for any training or development activity and then seek to be reimbursed. All training providers must invoice Council directly (and not an individual Councillor) for all training provided; and
- After attending a conference, seminar, event or training course, provide a written summary to Council, which outlines the purpose of the conference, learning outcomes, matters of relevance to the Frankston municipality, issues for consideration by Council and any recommendations.

Manager Governance and Information and/or Manager People and Culture will:

- provide advice to Council at the start of each year of the Council term of office on the allocation of 'credit points' available to each Councillor.

Coordinator Governance will:

- Provide a status report on expenditure of the PDA for each Councillor at the end of each financial year.

7. Policy non-compliance

If a Councillor enters into an arrangement for training or enrolls for a course in contravention of this Policy, the costs or fees for such training or course may not be paid by Council.

If a Councillor personally pays for training or a course in contravention of this Policy, they may not be reimbursed for the training.

In such cases, payment of the fees or costs, or reimbursement of the fees or costs, must be approved by Council resolution.

Failure to comply with this Policy may result in Council not paying for the services, in which case the Councillor may personally incur the costs for any non-approved training.

8. Related documents

- Council Expenses Policy
- Councillor Expense Reimbursement Protocol
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Local Government Act 2020

- Local Government (General) Regulations 2015
- Procurement Policy and Guidelines

9. Implementation of the Policy

This Policy (in conjunction with other Related Documents) will be made available on Council’s website, intranet and Councillor Portal so that it can be used by Councillors to understand the training and professional development requirements.

10. Document History

Date approved	Change Type	Version	Next Review Date
19 July 2021	Revised	2	May 2025

Industry approved conferences, seminars, events or training programs

The following are deemed industry approved training programs, conferences, events and seminars that Councillors may want to consider attending throughout the term:

- Australian Company Directors Course
- Coaching and Mentoring Workshops
- Land Use Planning and Building
- MAV Councillor Development Program, which includes land use planning and building, roles and responsibilities of a Councillor, meeting procedures, decision making, understanding Council Finances, Public Speaking Workshop, Managing communications, media training, conflict management, speed reading, resilience and wellbeing, social media and cyber safety, emotional intelligence, negotiating and influencing capabilities
- MAV Graduate Diploma of Business Administration (Executive)
- MAV Understanding Local Government (eLearning Module)
- MAV Councillor Development Weekend
- MAV State Conference
- MAV State Council
- Managing Councillor Conduct
- National General Assembly
- VLGA Councillor Leadership Programs

Application Form: Councillor Training and Development

This form must be completed by Councillors to facilitate participation in professional development throughout the term.

Applications to attend interstate or overseas conferences, seminars, events or training must be discussed with the **CFO or delegate**, or as determined by Council, prior to arrangements being made.

Councillor Name	
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Type of Professional Development	
Conference	Seminar
Event	Professional Development (including training programs)

Name of Professional Development	
Date:	Location:
Cost \$	

***Please attach information about the professional development program*

How will participation at this professional development event meet the criteria in this Policy and will be of benefit to your role as Councillor?

Councillor signature	
Date	

Office use only		
Councillor budget allocation available	\$	
Does this meet the criteria within the Policy	Yes	No
Has the supporting material been attached?	Yes	No
Date forwarded to the CFO for approval		
Professional development approved by CFO	Yes	No
Signed by CFO		
Date		