

POLICY No:	71
POLICY TITLE:	COUNCILLOR INDUCTION TRAINING
SECTION RESPONSIBLE:	GOVERNANCE
MINUTE No:	1415
REVIEW DATE:	31 MARCH 2012

POLICY STATEMENT:

Councillors can better assist and represent their constituents and community if they have a well balanced understanding of the Local Government environment and their responsibilities and obligations.

INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of this policy is to prescribe the information and training that Council will provide to its Councillors as part of an induction program.

DEFINITIONS

G M	General Manager
Council	Greater Hume Shire Council
the Act	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i>

TOPICS

The topics, as described below, should be presented to all newly elected Councillors and should be supported by written materials that the Councillor can retain as a resource.

1. SHIRE OVERVIEW

This session gives Councillors an overview of the Council, including size and population, details of relevant local history and demographic trends.

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As part of the induction process, Councillors will also be required to take part in a Shire tour.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE LEGAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This topic defines the relationships between the three tiers of government, the local government charter and the balancing of representative duties with decision-making responsibilities.

3. THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCILLORS AND STAFF

This topic includes the *Local Government Act 1993* and the provisions that relate to Councillors, the Mayor, the GM and the delegation process.

How Councillors guide the direction of Council and Council staff are responsible for implementing the decisions of Council should also be addressed.

Councillor responsibility for overseeing the performance of the General Manager and interaction between councillors and staff should also be covered during this session.

4. ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW: STAFFING AND MAJOR POLICY DOCUMENTS

This session looks at Council's organisation structure and provides information on key strategic and policy documents including the Management Plan, the budget and key policies.

5. LEGAL AND ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Councillors are informed of their key areas of accountability, compliance and disclosure.

This should include: Council's Code of Conduct, Pecuniary Interests, Conflicts of Interest, Gifts and Benefits, Use of Resources and Use of Information. This topic should also cover Council's Policy For Payment of Expenses & Provision of Facilities To Mayors and Councillors.

6. CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMPLAINTS HANDLING

This topic looks at the processes and procedures Council has in place for providing excellent customer service and appropriately dealing with community complaints to ensure a professional and consistent approach.

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7. TEAMWORK, COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Councillors need to develop skills to enable them to effectively perform their duties. These include teamwork skills, effective communication and conflict resolution.

8. STRATEGIC PLANNING

Council's strategic direction and those documents outlining that direction requires significant input from Council's elected members. Councillors should be made aware of the process including community consultation.

9. DECISION MAKING

This session covers Council's Code of Meeting Practice, the meeting provisions of the Act and Local Government Regulation. General meeting procedures should be introduced including: closed meetings, business papers and Councillor Access to information.

10. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FINANCIAL PROCESSES AND OTHER PLANNING PROCESSES

Councillors are made aware of their responsibilities with regard to the financial management of Council. Councillors may also require guidance to the use of a range of basic tools to understand, interpret and develop the financial resources of Council.

11. KEY FUNCTIONAL AREAS OF COUNCIL OPERATIONS

Councillors are given information relating to key areas of Council's activities and meet with Directors responsible for managing these activities.

12. ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Councillors will be given the opportunity to participate in further training throughout their term in Council to ensure they are well informed and educated on issues relating to Local Government.

13. HOW WILL THIS TRAINING BE FUNDED?

Council's training budget is to accommodate the training requirements as outlined within this document. The training will be delivered by a variety of means and by engaging an external facilitator to attend a weekend workshop (date to be determined).

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ASSOCIATED LEGISLATIONS

This policy complements other legislation and where it is silent on matters referred to in the following legislation such matters must be followed in accordance with the legislation.

This policy can be varied by the General Manager if exceptional circumstances prevail.

- *Local Government Act 1993*

ASSOCIATED COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

Councillor Induction Manual (*under development*)

POLICY REVIEW

This policy may be reviewed at any time and must be reviewed before the commencement of a new Councillor term.

Adopted by Council 19 March 2008.