

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR COUNCILLOR INDUCTION TRAINING

Report Author: Co-ordinator Governance & Integrity
Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services
Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public

SUMMARY

This report confirms that all Yarra Ranges Councillors have fulfilled the mandatory training requirements as stipulated by the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024* within the required four-month timeframe following their oath of office. A signed declaration has been completed by all Yarra Ranges Councillors and witnessed by the Chief Executive Officer. Attachment One provides an unsigned copy of the declaration.

This training aligns with the Model Councillor Code of Conduct and ensures adherence to the highest standards of governance and ethical conduct.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the completion of all mandatory Councillor training requirements.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

There are no related Council decisions relevant to this item.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

Building upon the *Local Government Act 2020*, the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024* further formalised the need for onboarding and ongoing Councillor training. This requirement ensures Councillors are well-equipped to perform their duties with integrity, accountability, and transparency.

All Yarra Ranges Councillors have completed the required legislative training requirements within four months of taking their oath of office. The completed mandatory training topics and associated section of the Local Government Act include:

1. *Working Together in a Council:*

- Roles & Responsibilities/ Expense Policy (s41)/ Remuneration Policy (s45).
- Relationships and Strategic Decision-Making/Strategic Public Leader.

2. *Decision Making, Integrity and Accountability:*

- Governance and Code of Conduct (s139).
- Role of a Mayor and Deputy Mayor/Delegated Committees (s11).
- Meetings and Decision Making (s11).
- Governance Rules, Forum and Council Meeting Overview (s11).
- Fraud & Corruption Awareness (s137 and s138).

3. *Community Representation:*

- Context of Yarra Ranges – Understanding the Community (s88).
- Safer Communities and Health & Wellbeing.
- Community Engagement at Yarra Ranges (s55).

4. *Strategic Planning and Financial Management:*

- Introduction to Corporate Planning and Local Government Finance (s98).
- Procurement Overview
- Budget & Long-Term Financial Plan (s91, s92 and s93).
- Risk Management (s138).
- Introduction to Audit & Risk Management Committee (s54).
- Asset Management and Capital Investment (s97).
- Council Plan & Budget (s90 and s94).

5. Conduct:

- Communicating with our Community.
- Good Governance.
- Occupational Health and Safety.

6. Land Use Planning:

- Statutory Planning, Building and Development Compliance (s12B).
- Planning Scheme – Statutory (s12B) and Strategic (s12B).

Councillors were also provide further training on topics deemed appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The expenditure associated with the Councillor induction training was met through existing operational budgets.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan: High Performing Organisation.

- Provides a clear framework for ethical conduct and decision-making by Councillors.
- Safeguards Council's reputation and integrity by establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour for elected representatives.
- Promotes accountability and transparency in Council operations by clearly defining the expected conduct of Councillors in their roles and responsibilities.
- Fosters a culture of continuous improvement and excellence by setting clear expectations for Councillor behaviour and performance.
- Local Government Election and Integrity Policies

RELEVANT LAW

- *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024*
- *Local Government Act 2020*

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

Compliance with mandatory training requirements enhances Council's financial management and resource allocation by promoting informed and responsible decision-making.

Social Implications

Fosters public trust in local government and strengthens relationships between Councillors and the community.

Environmental Implications

Ethical behaviour and good governance support environmentally responsible decision-making, contributing to long-term environmental sustainability.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Sector collaboration was essential in ensuring that Council officers effectively complied with the legislative requirements for Councillor induction training.

As required Council collaborated with external legal and governance consultants who provided expert advice on interpreting the legislation and applying best practices. This collaboration ensured that internal policies and processes aligned with legal requirements.

Maintaining an open line of communication with the state government to stay informed about further updates or clarifications regarding compliance was required. Collaboration with these agencies ensured that Council stayed on top of any regulatory changes or additional requirements.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Failure to comply with the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024* would expose Council to legal, operational, financial, reputational, and ethical risks. Completion of mandatory training mitigates these risks and ensures effective governance.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. Councillor Training Program Declaration (unsigned)