

COUNCILLOR INDUCTION PROGRAM POLICY

1. STATEMENT OF POLICY INTENT

The intent of this policy is give an overview of the information and training that Wentworth Shire Council will provide to its Councillors as part of an induction program.

2. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Act	Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
GM	General Manager
OH&S	Occupational Health and Safety
Regulations	Local Government (General) Regulations 2005 (NSW)

3. POLICY

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. 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.

Understanding the Legal and Political Context of Local Government

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

The Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors and Staff

This topic should include the Local Government Act and the provisions that relate to Councillors, the Mayor, the General Manager 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.

This section also introduces Councillors to the Council values.

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Other Reference:	Nil		
Application:	All Councillors		
Attachments:	Nil		

Legal and Ethical Responsibilities and Risk Management

This session should provide Councillors with information as to 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 Section 252 policy.

Risk management and personal legal responsibilities such as OH&S, privacy and records management will also be covered in this section.

Decision Making

This session should cover 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.

Organisational Overview: Staffing and Major Policy Documents

This session should include a review of Council's organisation structure and should provide information on key strategic and policy documents including the Management Plan, the budget and key policies.

Key Functional Areas of Council Operations

Councillors should be given information relating to the key areas of Council's activities including:

- Planning and other regulatory functions
- Infrastructure
- Community Services
- Governance

Strategic Planning and Change Management

Council's strategic direction (and those documents outlining that direction, such as the Management Plan) requires significant input from Council's elected members. Councillors should be made aware of the process including community consultation and change management.

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The Relationship Between Financial Processes and Other Planning Processes

Councillors should be made aware of their responsibilities in regards to the financial management of Council. Councillors will also require guidance to the use of a range of basic tools to understand, interpret and develop the financial resources of council.

Customer Service and Complaints Handling

This topic should cover the concept of customer service and the development of processes and mechanisms for both Councillors and staff that compliment each other.

Teamwork, Communication and Conflict in Local Government

Councillors need to develop skills to enable them to effectively perform their duties. These would include:

- Teamwork skills
- Conflict resolution

Orientation to Council facilities and Local Government Area

Councillors will be given the opportunity to visit the council chambers, officers and other facilities.

They will also be given a demographic profile of the Shire including the social, environmental and economic issues facing the various townships.

Support to assist Councillors in the role

Councillors will be provided with information relating to Councillor annual fees, provision of councillor expenses and facilities and training and development opportunities.

4. RESPONSIBILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY

The GM is responsible for ensuring Councillors receive the appropriate information contained within this policy.

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

5.1. ASSOCIATED LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 1993

Local Government (General) Regulations 2005

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5.2. ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENT POLICY PROVISIONS

Department of Local Government – Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guide.

5.3. ASSOCIATED COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

Code of Conduct
Councillors' Manual

6. POLICY STATUS

This policy was formally adopted by Council on 24 June 2009 and commenced operation on 24 June 2009. This policy replaces the previous version adopted on 19 December 2007 and includes minor grammatical changes and inclusion of additional topic areas including Risk Management, Change Management, Orientation to Council Facilities and Local Government Area and Support to Assist Councillors in the role.

7. POLICY REVIEW

This policy may be amended or revoked at any time and must be reviewed at least twelve months since its adoption (or latest amendment).

8. AUTHORISATION

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Position: General Manager

Date: /...../.....

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