



Local Government Association
of South Australia

The voice of local government.

Council Members' Guide

www.lga.sa.gov.au

- SA councils - PART - of your - EVERY DAY.

About the Council Members' Guide

The guide has been published as an electronic booklet for your convenience, so it can provide live links to a number of other useful resources.

Provisions of the *Local Government Act 1999* and other Acts change from time to time and this guide is not a substitute for checking specific legislative provisions when required. If there is any inconsistency between this guide and any Act, then the Act must be relied upon.

The Local Government Association of South Australia is grateful to the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) for their generous support in providing copyright of their 'New Councillor Resource Guide 2016' which has informed some of the structure and content of this guide.

The contents of this guide were up to date at the time of publication.

Published: October 2018

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Congratulations on being elected by your community to serve on council

As a council member you have an opportunity to make a positive difference to your local community. Being a council member is an exciting, challenging and rewarding role. It requires commitment, an ability to represent the local community, and being open to develop skills to be an effective leader.

The main purpose of this guide is to inform you about being a council member and to provide practical ideas about how local government works and your roles and responsibilities within that system. It outlines some of the key information you will need to know and some of the issues you may have to deal with. It lists key contacts and handy hints to help you throughout your term.

About the LGA

The mission of the Local Government Association of South Australia (the LGA) is to provide leadership, support, representation and advocacy on behalf of South Australian councils, for the benefit of the community.

The LGA is a membership organisation which supports and advocates for councils, and provides quality service and leadership relevant to the needs of local government.

Membership of the LGA is voluntary and every council in the State are members. The LGA is recognised as the peak representative body for local government in South Australia and prides itself on being 'the voice of local government'.

How can we help?

One of the LGA's roles is to provide support, advice and assistance to councils and council members. With a small team of specialist staff who can either assist with questions or put you in touch with someone who can help.

Give us a call

Call us on (08) 8224 2000 or email us lgasa@lga.sa.gov.au, explain your query and we'll put you in touch with the right person.

congratulations

Shared learnings

Council members past and present can have good advice on what it's like to be on council. Here are some of the shared learnings and tips that may help both new council members and returning council members on the important things to be mindful of as a council and community leader.

Don't panic

No one expects you to know everything.

Ask for help

It is impossible to be an expert in everything. That is the role of the CEO and council staff and is what they are there for. If you need to understand something better to make a decision on council, just ask them. No question is silly, asking is an intelligent way to go.

Don't get personal

Council has to work together for four years, so don't personalise issues or go too hard too early. Once council has made a decision, accept it. Even if you disagree, move on and present a unified front with other council members.

Encourage council member interaction

The CEO and administration are likely to create opportunities for council members to get to know each other and become a team. Make the effort to be part of these opportunities.

Build effective working relationships

You don't need to agree with your other council members, but do show respect for differences. Build relationships by finding something in common. This can go a long way to building good team dynamics and working effectively on council.

Explain, don't blame

If you're asked to talk about a council decision you don't agree with, explain but don't blame. It's your role to uphold decisions of council. It's counter-productive to undermine a decision once it's been made.

Work as a team

The council is not just council members but includes the CEO and council staff – one team, one purpose (with different roles) – making a difference for the community.

Don't promise what you can't deliver

Never promise or over-promise anything in the community before speaking to council or the administration. It's important to understand the broader context and know what is possible.

No surprises

Keep other council members and the CEO in the loop on important things. Share information openly with the CEO and council members to avoid any surprises.

Canvas opinion widely

Don't confuse the views of a few people with the views of everyone in the community. While the person in the street may be adamant their view is commonplace, it's important to canvas opinion widely and weigh this up with the information you are given from the council staff on any issue.

Be assertive

Just because something has always been done a certain way doesn't mean you can't question it or that it's necessarily right. This applies to council but also to you.

Seek support

Remember, you're not alone. A support network will greatly assist you. If you're having problems in your role, talk to other council members or the CEO.

Manage your time

Take time reading your council papers as a priority and be prepared to engage in meetings. Typically a council member would spend 10 – 20 hours a week on both preparing for council meetings and fulfilling their civic role.

Getting familiar with your new role

Getting familiar with your new role as a council member is a rewarding and challenging process. You'll need to learn the language of local government, pick up new skills and do a lot of reading. Your personal attributes, qualities and talents will play a significant part in helping you and you certainly won't be alone in getting started.

The council CEO and staff will have an induction program planned for the new council to help council members. One of the first things you'll need to do is gain a clear understanding of your role and responsibilities, and become familiar with the processes and strategies of council. So make use of the time allocated to support you, the resources provided and take advantage of the training opportunities to assist you in your first year.

If you are a returning council member it is a good time to reflect on:

- What are the things you are doing well?
- What might be some things you could improve?
- How can you contribute to building a new and effective council?

Key documents and processes

There are a number of critical documents you'll need to become familiar with in your first months as a council member.

Hopefully you may have read some of these documents as part of your background research as a candidate in the election. It is important you have time to read these and ask any questions. The CEO and key council staff will probably go through some of these as part of your induction. The key documents and processes include:

- council's four year strategic management plan
- council's long term financial management plan
- council's annual business plan and budget
- community plan (if your council has one)
- infrastructure & asset management plan
- public health plan
- meeting procedures
- policy documents
- local laws

Managing your time

Councils manage hundreds of services and there are many processes to learn. As a new council member you may experience in your role a sense of being overloaded, overwhelmed and trying to manage your time. Just know, you're not alone. Everyone is faced with the same experience when learning about the role of being a council member and understanding what you need to know in a short space of time. There are a few practical things you can do to help manage your time more effectively in the first few months.

1 Use the resources and support provided

Council members are provided with the equipment needed to fulfil the role. Ask for help in creating a system for filing emails, paperwork and managing your diary – a good place to start is your council support officer or another council member.

2 Get to know the systems

Get to know and, more importantly, trust the systems that the CEO and council has in place to support enquiries, complaints and requests for service. Use your knowledge of the council to direct enquiries or feedback through the right channels.

3 Take one step at a time

Try not to take on too much else. Accept that your first three months as a council member is an information gathering and sharing phase with a steep learning curve. If you're prepared for this, and have cleared your diary of some other commitments during this time it will be easier to manage. Getting familiar with key documents, participating in an induction program and learning the process of council meetings is a good focus to start with. In time you'll know how much time you can dedicate to other activities and events.

Tip:

Use your council electronic equipment, such as laptops, for your information and papers.

Try to avoid printed material – hard copies will only weigh you down (literally).

Try and prioritise what you need to read to inform your decision-making.

Understanding local government

One of three tiers of government

The three tiers of government - local, state and Commonwealth - work together in various ways to govern and provide services to all Australians. Although each tier functions differently and has very different powers and responsibilities, each has an important role.

A significant difference between local government and state and Commonwealth governments is that local government is not recognised in the Australian Constitution. Local governments across Australia are established by legislation made by their respective state parliaments.

In South Australia, the *South Australian Constitution Act 1934 (SA)*, provides for a system of elected local government bodies. As an elected system, local government is directly accountable to the community. The *Local Government Act 1999* establishes the constitution, system and operational framework for local government. While there are legislative functions and roles for each tier of government, there are many examples where the delivery of services to a community is the result of partnerships between councils, state and federal government.

A brief history

Prior to white settlement, aboriginal peoples had their own system of local governance. South Australia has the distinction of forming the first council in Australia in 1840 when four aldermen and 15 councillors were elected to the new Adelaide Corporation.

In 1887 the Parliament of South Australia introduced the *District Councils Act* which established local government in many areas of the state.

Local government has always been responsive to community needs. In the early history of South Australia, the prime community need was for the building of railways and roads. In the early part of this century, the need for improved amenities and public health led to new focuses, such as improved drainage, food inspections and immunisation.

Communities in the 1950's–1980's demanded planning of land uses, improved libraries and more community support and development.

In 1997 council amalgamations occurred and by 1998 the number of councils was reduced from 118 to 68 councils across the state.

Councils in South Australia

The majority of the population in South Australia (about 99%) is served by councils. The Outback Areas Authority or one of five Aboriginal community organisations provide services to those areas outside of council areas.

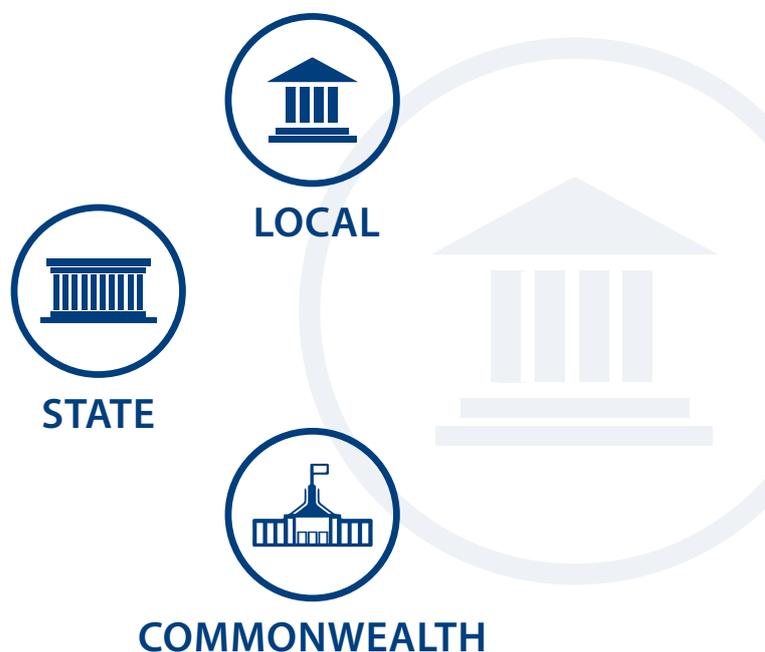
Each of the 68 individual councils in South Australia cover a defined geographic area that varies in size, population and environment. Despite these differences, all councils have the same general powers and responsibilities, and the discretion to choose many of the services they provide.

To view local government boundary maps, please visit the council maps page on the LGA website www.lga.sa.gov.au/councilmaps

Councils in South Australia today are responsible for complex strategic and operational functions with strong accountability to the community. They are responsible for providing important social, cultural, environmental and economic outcomes and form significant political and social networks to affect positive change. Consequently, councils are often referred to as the 'grass roots' tier of government as they are in touch with the changing needs and aspirations of the local community.

Councils either jointly or separately use their resources to meet the needs and priorities of the local community. They also work with state and federal government to achieve outcomes. Where appropriate, councils will act as an advocate, planner, coordinator and facilitator to deliver on their strategic directions.

An effective local government system requires informed and involved communities, contributing to the local decision making process through their councils, within a co-operative state and federal government framework.



The Local Government Act 1999

The *Local Government Act 1999* and *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999* provide the framework in which councils operate. The *Local Government Act 1999* provides a comprehensive legislative framework for open, accountable, efficient and effective local government. A council must observe and deliver on the objectives of the *Local Government Act 1999*.

Section 3 of the *Local Government Act 1999* sets out these objectives:

- to promote the continuance of a system of local government in South Australia under which elected local government bodies are constituted for the better governance of the State in a manner that is consistent with the provisions of Part 2A of the *Constitution Act 1934*;
- to encourage the participation of local communities in the affairs of local government and to provide local communities, through their councils, with sufficient autonomy to manage the local affairs of their area;
- to provide a legislative framework for an effective, efficient and accountable system of local government in South Australia;
- to ensure the accountability of councils to the community;
- to improve the capacity of the local government system to plan for, develop and manage local areas and to enhance the capacity of councils to act within their local areas as participants in the Australian system of representative government;
- to encourage local government to provide appropriate services and facilities to meet the present and future needs of local communities;
- to encourage local government to manage the natural and built environment in an ecologically sustainable manner; and
- to define the powers of local government and the roles of council members and officials.

Councils have authority to act in areas specified in the *Local Government Act 1999* and other legislation where specific tasks and functions are devolved to councils. A long list of state and Commonwealth Acts impact on the functions and activities that councils undertake. Ask your CEO about the Acts that are relevant to your council's operations.

Services provided by local government

Councils provide statutory (obligatory) and discretionary services in accordance with specific roles and powers defined by the *Local Government Act 1999* or other legislation.

Councils must provide regulatory services such as:

- zoning, planning and building safety;
- fire prevention and hazard management;
- dog and cat management and control;
- parking control;
- waste collection;
- public health protection and promotion and food safety inspections; and
- public health planning.

Other services are provided at the discretion of each council. Discretionary services vary from one council to another and depend on the size and geographic location of the council area, the number of people living in the area, physical environment, priority needs of the local community, and available resources and funding.

Examples include:

- street lighting;
- library and information services;
- parks, ovals and sporting facilities;
- swimming pools and leisure centres;
- community facilities and halls;
- coastal care;
- support services for elderly people and people with a disability;
- tourism initiatives;
- wetlands and water resource management; and
- promoting economic development.

Many of the services provided by councils have been shaped by history, changing community expectations and responding to future needs.

Efficient and effective service provision

Councils are responsible for ensuring services are delivered in the most efficient and effective manner. The *Local Government Act 1999* provides autonomy to councils to determine policies with their communities about the nature and level of services provided, but councils are accountable for how community resources are used. The challenge for councils is to achieve a range and level of services that meets community needs at an acceptable cost to the community.

Structure of councils

Councils as a corporate body

Each of the 68 councils is a corporate body and bears the name assigned to it. The council members form the governing body of the council.

As a corporate body, a council is regarded in law as a legal entity and is capable of acquiring rights and incurring liabilities.

Individual council members have no authority to make decisions or act on behalf of the council.

Only the council members, as a whole, form the corporate body that has powers and responsibilities.

Each council covers a defined geographic area which may be divided internally into areas known as wards. Some councils are constituted with wards, others are not. Wards are an electoral division for the election of council members. If a council is divided into wards there is a requirement in the *Local Government Act 1999* that the number of people represented by a council member in a ward (the ward quota) must not vary by more than 10 percent from other wards.

Council member

is the term for all elected members including the principal member

Councillor
is the term for an elected member who is not the principal member

Composition of the elected council

A council consists of:

- a number of members appointed or elected who are known as councillors. Councillors represent either a ward or the council area as a whole.
- a principal member who may be elected as a representative of the area as a whole, or appointed by the council members from amongst their own number. The principal member may be called a mayor or a chairperson depending on whether they were elected or appointed.

Periodic elections for councils are held in November every four years (2018, 2022 and so on) and council members are elected for a four year term. The section on 'Understanding Roles' provides further information on the role of council, council members, the CEO and administration.

Committee and corporate structures available to councils

Specific powers are provided in the *Local Government Act 1999* with respect to the establishment of council committees, subsidiaries and regional subsidiaries. The powers and functions of these entities are determined by the council (or councils in partnership) and council retains control over their operations. Specific requirements for the formation, governance and operations of these entities are prescribed in the *Local Government Act 1999*.

Councils can also participate in the formation of an incorporated association under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1985*, however the ability of a council to control an incorporated association following its establishment is limited.

Committees

Section 41 committees

Committees established under section 41 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, report to the council and are subject to the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1999*.

The role and tasks of committees are varied and councils establish committees to:

- enquire into matters and to provide and make recommendations to the council on matters within the council's responsibilities;
- carry out a specific project or task on behalf of the council;
- manage or administer property, facilities or activities on behalf of the council;
- oversee works on behalf of the council; and
- exercise, perform or discharge delegated powers, functions or duties.

Audit committee

As part of council's leadership and good governance obligations councils are required to have an audit committee.

The audit committee provides a disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of council's financial management, risk management, internal controls and governance processes. Councils may also refer issues of a strategic nature to their audit committee.

As a committee of council they are responsible for providing advice and recommendations to council. The audit committee must have between three to five council members (inclusive) and also include at least one independent person who is not a member of the council and who is determined by the council to have financial experience relevant to the function of the audit committee.

Audit committees can only act in areas covered by their terms of reference yet, they provide an important independent role between a council and its management and between a council and its community.

Subsidiaries

There are two types of subsidiaries - those established by one council (a 'subsidiary': see section 42 of the *Local Government Act 1999*) and those established by two or more councils (a 'regional subsidiary': see section 43 of the *Local Government Act 1999*).

Subsidiaries are corporate bodies, with a board of management appointed by council/s that can be used to provide a service, manage or administer property, facilities or activities, or perform a statutory function of council/s.

For further information
download the **Council
committee and corporate
structures** from
www.lga.sa.gov.au/guidelines



Understanding roles

The importance of forming good relationships

Good relationships are crucial to your leadership role as a council member and are based on a clear understanding of what's expected of the council, councillors, mayor (or chairperson), CEO and council staff (administration).

A lack of understanding of the roles and responsibilities in local government can cause communication problems and expectations not being met. In turn, this can lead to tension and poor council performance.

One way to ensure that everyone on your council has a common understanding of the key roles and responsibilities is through a group discussion amongst council members, CEO and senior staff.

Role of council

A council is elected to provide leadership for the good governance of a local community. It must take into account the diverse needs of the community in its decision making, set and monitor strategic objectives and ensure resources are managed responsibly. A key objective of a council is to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard to both present and future generation needs.

The role of council is to:

- act as a responsible decision-maker in the interests of its community;
- provide services and facilities and develop its community in a socially just and ecologically sustainable manner;
- improve the quality of life of the community;
- represent the interests of its community to the wider community; and
- exercise, perform and discharge the powers, functions and duties under the *Local Government Act 1999* and other relevant acts.

A principal role of a council is to act as a representative, informed and responsible decision maker in the interests of the community

Functions of a council

The *Local Government Act 1999* sets out key functions council must perform. These are significant functions that include to:

- plan at the local and regional level for the development and future requirements of its area;
- provide services and facilities that benefit its area, its ratepayers and residents, and visitors to its area (including general public services or facilities (including electricity, gas and water services, and waste collection, control or disposal services or facilities), health, welfare or community services or facilities, and cultural or recreational services or facilities);
- provide for the welfare, well-being and interests of individuals and groups within its community;
- take measures to protect its area from natural and other hazards and to mitigate the effects of such hazards;
- manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment in an ecologically sustainable manner, and to improve amenity;
- provide infrastructure for its community and for development within its area (including infrastructure that helps to protect any part of the local or broader community from any hazard or other event, or that assists in the management of any area);
- promote its area and to provide an attractive climate and locations for the development of business, commerce, industry and tourism;
- establish or support organisations or programs that benefit people in its area or local government generally;
- manage and, if appropriate, develop, public areas vested in, or occupied by, the council;
- manage, improve and develop resources available to the council;
- undertake other functions and activities conferred by or under an Act.

Principles to observe

A council must act to uphold and promote observance of the following principles in the performance of its roles and functions:

- provide open, responsive and accountable government;
- be responsive to the needs, interests and aspirations of individuals and groups within its community;
- participate with other councils, and with state and national governments, in setting public policy and achieving regional, state and national objectives;
- give due weight, in all its plans, policies and activities, to regional, state and national objectives and strategies concerning the economic, social, physical and environmental development and management of the community;
- seek to co-ordinate with state and national government in the planning and delivery of services in which those governments have an interest;
- seek to facilitate sustainable development and the protection of the environment and to ensure a proper balance within its community between economic, social, environmental and cultural considerations;
- manage its operations and affairs in a manner that emphasises the importance of service to the community;
- seek to ensure that council resources are used fairly, effectively and efficiently;
- seek to provide services, facilities and programs that are adequate and appropriate and seek to ensure equitable access to its services, facilities and programs;
- achieve and maintain standards of good public administration; and
- ensure the sustainability of the council's long-term financial performance and position.

In addition, Section 132A of the *Local Government Act 1999* states that:

A council must ensure that appropriate policies, practices and procedures are implemented and maintained to

- ensure compliance with any statutory requirements; and
- achieve and maintain standards of good public administration.

The *Local Government Act 1999* clearly states the significant role of council. A key challenge for council members is to stay focused on the strategic issues rather than get involved in the day to day operations. What is important to understand is that while there are different roles of council members, CEOs and council staff, there can be great satisfaction and shared success in each playing a part in making a difference for a community.

Term of office

Council members are elected for a four year term of office. All positions on council become vacant at the next periodic election. All members can seek re-election.

The *Local Government Act 1999* also defines factors that could require a council member to vacate office. These include where a council member:

- becomes bankrupt;
- is convicted of an indictable offence punishable by imprisonment;
- becomes a member of state or Commonwealth Parliament;
- becomes an employee of the council they are a council member of; or
- fails to submit a return of interest or campaign donations return.

It is important to know that council members cannot be absent from three or more consecutive ordinary council meetings without the council's approval. If this occurs a council may remove the council member from office.

A member may resign from office by providing notice in writing to the CEO. This notice is effective from the date the CEO receives it or up to 14 days later according to what is stated in the letter of resignation. A resignation, once submitted, cannot be withdrawn.

If a council member's office becomes vacant, a supplementary election may be held if the vacancy occurs before 1 January of a year in which a periodic election is due. If a vacancy occurs after 1 January of a year in which a periodic election is due, the position is not filled under the periodic election.

General duties of council members

The general duties and public office requirements are set out in section 62 of the *Local Government Act 1999* and are as follows:

- You must at all times act honestly in the performance and discharge of official functions and duties;
- You must at all times act with reasonable care and diligence in the performance and discharge of official functions and duties;
- You as a current or former council member must not, whether within or outside the state, make improper use of information acquired by virtue of your position as a council member to gain, directly or indirectly, an advantage for you or for another person or to cause detriment to the council; and
- You as a current or former council member must not, whether within or outside the state, make improper use of your position as a council member to gain, directly or indirectly, an advantage for yourself or for another person or to cause detriment to the council.

The provisions of section 62 of the *Local Government Act 1999* also extend to:

- committees and to members of committees; and
- subsidiaries and to board members of subsidiaries.

There are significant penalties for breaches of these provisions.

Role of a council member

The role of a council member is both rewarding and challenging. Whether as the principal member or a councillor, you are a community leader, with the opportunity to represent your community in a number of different roles. In order to carry out these roles effectively you will need to take an informed, active role in the business of the council, representing the interests of the community and participating in the decision-making process.

The responsibilities of a council member are to adhere to the objectives and principles of the *Local Government Act 1999* as well as the defined role of a council member to:

- participate in the deliberations and civic activities of the council;
- keep the council's objectives and policies under review, ensuring they are appropriate and effective;
- keep the council's resource allocation and efficiency and effectiveness of its service delivery under review;
- observe the principles set out in section 8 of the *Local Government Act 1999*;
- represent the interests of residents and ratepayers, provide community leadership and guidance, and facilitate communication between the community and the council.

In practice, this means:

- participating in council meetings conducted using formal meeting rules;
- reading and understanding reports and recommendations for decision of the council, including financial, environmental and social reports;
- presenting arguments and constructively debating with other council members before making informed decisions about what is in the best interests of the whole community;
- contributing to the council's strategic directions and local governance in general; and
- being aware of the interests of residents and ratepayers, through being readily available and contactable.

Role of the mayor or chairperson

The mayor or chairperson (who is either elected at large or chosen by council members) is the principal member – the leader of council. The mayor/chairperson role should be clearly understood by council members and council staff.

The role of the principal member (the mayor/chairperson) is:

- presiding at meetings of the council;
- if requested, to provide advice to the CEO between council meetings regarding the implementation of a decision of the council;
- to act as the principal spokesperson of the council;
- to exercise other functions of the council as the council determines; and
- to carry out the civic and ceremonial duties of the office of principal member.

A council may decide to appoint a deputy to its mayor or chairperson. Council members choose the deputy from within council their own numbers and decide on the term of office.

A deputy acts for the mayor or chairperson in her or his absence. If a deputy has not been appointed, or is not available, the council can choose another member to be acting mayor/chairperson for a specific time.

The relationship between council members and council staff is very important. Each have separate but complementary roles.

Role of the CEO

Councils are required to appoint a CEO as the most senior member of staff. The CEO is the only member of staff that directly reports to the council.

The role of the CEO is set out in the *Local Government Act 1999* and includes:

- ensuring that the policies and lawful decisions of the council are implemented in a timely and efficient manner;
- being responsible for the day-to-day operations and affairs of the council;
- providing advice and reports to the council on the exercise and performance of its powers and functions;
- co-ordinating proposals for consideration by the council for developing objectives, policies and programs for the area;
- providing information to the council to assess performance against its strategic management plans;
- ensuring that timely and accurate information about council policies and programs is regularly provided to the community and appropriate and prompt responses are given to requests for information from the council;
- ensuring the assets and resources of the council are properly managed and maintained;
- ensuring records are properly kept and maintained;
- giving effect to the principles of human resource management and to apply proper management practices; and
- to perform other functions or duties conferred by the Act or other functions lawfully directed by the council.

The CEO is responsible for the management of all staff and administration matters, including the implementation of all council policies and decisions.

Role of the administration

The council staff (or the administration) is responsible for guiding, assisting and implementing council's goals, strategies and services under the direction of the CEO.

The CEO is responsible for appointing and managing staff of the council. Staff must act honestly and with reasonable care and diligence in the performance of their duties.

The *Local Government Act 1999* makes a clear distinction between the role of the elected council and the administration. A council member has no direct authority over an employee of the council with respect to the way in which the employee performs his or her duties.

Council member allowances

Council members are entitled to receive an annual allowance, being a payment intended to meet the expenses of office as a council member.

Allowances are determined by the independent Remuneration Tribunal and set every four years before periodic council elections, with the amounts adjusted by CPI annually during the term of council. The Tribunal is required to take into account a number of factors including the size, population and revenue of each council as well as any relevant economic, demographic and regional factors. Principal members' allowances are four times the council members' allowance (other than the Lord Mayor of City of Adelaide, who has an allowance set separately to other councils). The allowances of deputy mayors, deputy chairpersons and presiding members of prescribed committees are one and a quarter times the council members' allowance.

As allowances vary between councils, the CEO will be able to provide you with information on the allowance you will receive in your duties as a council member. There may be taxation and Centrelink implications of receiving an annual allowance that should be discussed with your personal financial advisor.

Council member expenses

Council members are entitled to reimbursement of expenses actually and necessarily incurred in travelling within the council area to or from a council or committee meeting, and for the care of a dependant as a consequence of attendance at a council or committee meeting.

Councils may also resolve, on a discretionary basis, to reimburse council members for a range of additional expenses: for travel outside the council area; attendance at conferences; or telecommunications and IT support.

For more information download the *Council Members' Allowances & Benefits - Model Policy* from www.lga.sa.gov.au/guidelines



“ My experience indicates that the best team to achieve what a community desires is where the mayor and chief executive officer understand their respective roles.

This ensures that both support each other's roles and the council team and community benefit from a whole team approach.”

Council CEO

Delegations

Section 44 of the *Local Government Act 1999* provides that a council may delegate a power, function or duty to:

- a council committee;
- a subsidiary of the council;
- an employee of the council (including the CEO); and
- an authorised person.

Council may set limits to the delegation, monitor how the delegation is exercised and intervene if the standards are not being maintained.

A council-delegated authority does not mean council can no longer exercise its right to make decisions in relation to those matters. Council may revoke a delegation at will and can choose to act itself in relation to any matter which would normally be acted upon under delegation. Some functions under the *Development Act 1993* must be delegated to the Council Assessment Panel.

The *Local Government Act 1999* prohibits councils from delegating certain powers, including the power to make a by-law, declare rates, borrow money or establish a subsidiary.

If a delegation is made to an employee of the council, the employee is responsible to the CEO for the efficient and effective exercise of that delegation.

The CEO may also delegate, or sub-delegate, powers or functions vested to the CEO to:

- an employee or an employee for the time being occupying a particular office or position;
- to a committee comprising employees of the council; or
- to an authorised person.

A separate record is to be kept of all delegations and a review of all delegations is to be undertaken at least once in each financial year.

Delegations are important in assisting council to deliver the strategic directions and services to the community. In practice, many activities, and/or legislative responsibilities of council are delegated to the CEO to enable council to function efficiently and effectively.

Effective working relationships

The working relationship between council members and CEO is very important. Each have separate but complementary roles:

- council members decide the overall strategic direction of the council and set the policies and plans; and
- the CEO and staff (through the CEO's direction), undertake the administrative actions required to achieve the councils strategic directions.

When there is clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and effective working relationships (between council members and between council and CEO/staff) there is greater success in delivering outcomes to the community. Many councils have established processes, practices and/or protocols to ensure effective communication and information sharing to support a constructive culture in working together.

Policies and plans

One of the most important roles you have as a council member is to participate in strategic management planning and to make policy decisions on behalf of the community. It is a unique opportunity and responsibility to positively contribute to the strategic direction for the local area.

Strategic management planning

Planning for the development and well-being of communities is a critical role for councils. The *Local Government Act 1999* requires councils to develop and adopt 'plans' for the management of the local area.

Strategic management planning is in many ways the key interface between council members and council staff.

'Strategic management plans' is the collective term used in the Act for various council plans that:

- identify the principal activities and objectives of the council;
- estimate the revenues and expenses for the period of the plan; and
- state the financial and non-financial measures to be used to monitor and assess council performance against those plans.

Development of strategic management plans provides an opportunity for a council, together with its community, to set the goals and objectives appropriate for the local area and to determine the services and activities to be undertaken to meet these goals and objectives.

Council's plans are required to reflect the consideration it has given to the co-ordination of effort between local, state and Commonwealth governments in policy development and planning and delivery of services.

The framework

The framework for strategic management planning is prescribed in the *Local Government Act 1999*. It is the responsibility of individual councils to determine the contents of their plans and the strategies they will use to develop, promote, measure and report on the success of their plans. The framework allows councils, and their communities, to determine:

- the specific strategies or outcomes;
- the approach to be used to deliver the outcomes;
- the scope of services the council will provide, facilitate or advocate;
- the consultation approach the council will adopt to formulate or review its plan/s;
- how the outcomes of plans will be monitored; and
- under what circumstances and timeframe a review of plans will take place.

Councils engage community in the development of these plans and also consider the trends and influences that will impact on the council area. There are often complex and competing demands councils need to consider in determining priorities.

Asset management plans

Councils are responsible for a range of infrastructure assets and are required to have plans in place to manage these assets. Assets can include important infrastructure such as roads, bridges, buildings, footpaths, water infrastructure and public lighting, to name a few. For most councils these plans form part of their strategic management planning framework to ensure maintenance and renewal of infrastructure can be managed.

Example of a framework for strategic management planning



Long term financial plan

Councils are required to maintain long term financial management plans (LTFP). These are used to guide financial decision making to ensure the council remains financially sustainable.

The annual business plan and budget

The council is required to adopt, following public consultation, an annual business plan which must include a summary of the council's strategic management plan objectives that it intends to undertake in the relevant financial year.

Monitoring the expenditure of public money is one of the most important roles of the council. Every financial year the council is required to prepare and adopt a business plan and budget to deliver on council's longer term strategic management plans.

Other key plans

Each council has many other plans and strategies that support the strategic management plans. Plans for example that support the management of open space, the environment or arts and cultural activity. Each of these plans would involve community engagement in helping shape the character of a local area.

Regional public health plans

Regional public health plans are a significant planning requirement for councils. These plans are required under the *South Australian Public Health Act 2011*. This Act identifies councils as the local public health authority for its area. This means that councils are best placed to identify the public health and wellbeing needs of their community.

Councils however, are not solely responsible for delivering public health services and outcomes as there are many potential partners in the public health effort. This Act requires a council (or if the Minister so determines or approves, a group of councils) to prepare and maintain a Regional Public Health Plan to support council operations. Council must report on the plan on biennially.

The *South Australian Public Health Act 2011* allows for regional public health plans to be separate stand-alone documents or to be incorporated into strategic management plans. Councils may also decide to plan by themselves or as groups of councils.

The LGA has developed guidance materials and support programs to assist councils undertake public health planning.

For more information,
please visit
[www.lga.sa.gov.au/
publichealth](http://www.lga.sa.gov.au/publichealth)



Policy decision making

Policy decisions

Policy decisions are required in many situations. When determining policy there is often a wide range of opinions, opposing viewpoints and competing priorities. Policy decisions can be proactive and reactive.

Proactive policies are aimed at promoting community change. For example, this could relate to a decision to change refuse collection to reduce waste to landfill. Reactive policies are made in response to certain events. For example, needing to meet changed regulatory requirements directed by the state government.

It is important for you to be in touch with your community to ensure that council policies continue to accurately reflect changing views and aspirations. You may be required to make decisions about matters with which you are unfamiliar, in which case it is important to understand:

- rarely are policy-makers experts in the particular subject. The role of a policy-maker is not as an expert but rather as a leader and an adjudicator;
- policy-makers may not necessarily know all the answers. Rather, they actively seek information, ask questions, listen to the views of others and try to think laterally and innovatively in arriving at a decision. Specialist advice from staff, consultants or other specialists may assist the policy-making process; and
- a policy-maker is constantly required to make value judgements.

If your decisions are based on a clear understanding of the subject and what you believe to be in the best interests of the community, then you are exercising your policy-making responsibility appropriately.

As community needs and aspirations change councils have a responsibility to respond to those changes, and processes need to be in place to ensure ongoing evaluation of policies.

Planning - the basics

South Australia's planning system controls land use and the physical development of the state. The current planning system operates under the *Development Act 1993* and *Development Regulations 2008*. The South Australian planning system is undergoing its biggest reform in 20 years. As a council member it is important to have an understanding of the planning system, the changes taking place and how they will affect your local community.

A new legislative framework for South Australia

The *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (PDI Act) was passed by parliament on 12 April 2016 and granted Royal Assent by the Governor on 21 April 2016. The first elements of the new system were proclaimed on 1 April 2017 and included the following:

- establishing a State Planning Commission;
- preparing a community engagement charter; and
- creation of the SA Planning Portal.

The PDI Act is being brought into operation in stages over the next 2 years, with the new system to be fully operation in July 2020. This new legislation will significantly reform the state's planning policies and processes, modernising our planning system.

In some cases, as new elements of the PDI Act are introduced, parts of the *Development Act 1993* and associated regulations are repealed. The planning reform is a result of recommendations made by an expert panel on planning reform to government.

Key elements of South Australia's planning systems

Planning strategy

The planning strategy sets out the state government's directions for land use changes and development in South Australia. The directions in the strategy become policy at the council level when they are incorporated into the development plans for individual council areas. There are several volumes of the planning strategy – the 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide Update and plans for regional South Australia.

Councils development plans

Whilst councils are actively involved in the state planning reforms they continue to administer council development plans. Each council area has a development plan that guides the type of development that can occur within the council area. Planners use the policies in development plans to assess development applications. Development plans include planning zones, policy areas, and lists complying and non-complying land uses within each zone. Council development plans will be replaced by a state-wide Planning and Design Code by July 2020.

Development plan amendments

Development plans are often subject to ongoing strategic reviews and amendments to ensure that planning trends and community issues are balanced. Changes to development plans are made via the development plan amendment process (DPAs) which can be prepared by either a council or by the Minister for Planning. All DPAs are subject to the approval of the Minister for Planning. DPAs are notified and released for public consultation for a minimum of eight weeks.

Council assessment panels

A council assessment panel (CAP) is an independent panel of appointed persons who consider and make decisions on some development applications in the council area. The role of the CAP is to make impartial and transparent development assessment decisions based on the policies contained within development plans.

The PDI Act stipulates the composition of CAPs, with the number of council members who can be a member of the CAP to be a maximum of one. In regional areas some councils have got together and formed regional assessment panels.

Delegating planning decision-making

Delegated decision making to council planners is essential for the efficient operation of planning. Council's main role is to develop policy and strategic plans that applications will be assessed against. Council planners assess a large majority of applications against council policy (if not required to be referred to CAP or the state government for assessment).

Planning & development approval processes

'Planning' is the concept of what an applicant wants to do.

Consents are required for the physical construction and assessment process. A development approval can be made up of three types of consents:

- land division consent;
- building rules consent; and
- development plan consent.

Generally development often involves two types of consent – with the most frequent being building rules consent and development plan consent.

Consultation process

South Australia's planning system provides opportunities for councils to let people in the community know about development proposals. Notice is usually given to people who may be affected by a proposed development. Council must ensure that the notice provides enough information about a proposal, and that the decision is made ultimately based on the planning merits.

The CEO will be able to provide you with further information and updates on the planning reform.

For more information, please visit the SA Planning Portal www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au



Tip:

Never make a commitment to a person you know in the community who is lodging a planning or building application.

It is always best to refer queries to the planning officers who can ensure that an applicant is given early professional advice and that any application is assessed against existing policies.

It is also a good idea to wait and see what issues arise from consultation with the applicants and any objectors. As a council member, you are required to act impartially and this is the best approach in demonstrating your leadership to community.

Local government finance

Local government revenue

In South Australia, local government raises revenue from a range of sources including, rates, fees and charges, fines and grants from other spheres of government.

The pie chart below shows the revenue for South Australian councils. The percentage of funding varies from council to council, with inner metropolitan councils generating a higher percentage of revenue from fees, charges and fines, and rural councils predominately generating revenue from rates and grants.

Financial responsibilities and accountability

The *Local Government Act 1999* and the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1999* specifies a range of requirements councils must implement to support good financial governance. Councils are required to manage resources responsibly for the benefit of the community, including to:

- ensure that council resources are used fairly, effective and efficiently;
- ensure there is a sufficient resource base to fulfil its functions fairly, effectively and efficiently;
- provide various public services and facilities and develop its community and resources in a socially just and ecological sustainable manner;
- ensure that changes, wherever practicable, benefit ratepayers;
- ensure that resources are used economically, while recognising the desirability to avoid significant divisions with a community;
- and
- be accountable for the use of council and other public resources.

For more information on the legislation, please visit www.lga.sa.gov.au/legislation

Financial planning and reporting

There are key documents that are central to managing the financial performance of the council – the strategic management plans, the annual business plan, council budget and annual report.

Council's strategic management plans and annual business plans

As described earlier in this guide, the council's strategic management plan is where everything begins. If it's not in the strategic management plan or annual business plan, then it is unlikely to be budgeted for and be actioned.

An important aspect of council's strategic management plans and annual business plan is the long term financial plan and the asset management plan. All these tie together to inform council's deliberations and decision making on council's annual budget.

Council budget

While each council budget differs according to the local community needs and priorities, there is a common legislated framework for setting a budget that each council must follow.

Monitoring the expenditure of public money is one of the most important roles of the council. Every financial year the council is required to prepare and adopt a budget which must be considered in conjunction with the council's annual business plan.

Annual report

The annual report is published at the end of each financial year. It records activities and financial transactions of the year. The *Local Government Act 1999* requires the annual report to be published and submitted to the Minister for Local Government.

Council and CEO's role

Sound financial governance enhances public confidence in local government operations and helps to ensure that a council is in a position to make decisions that are responsive to the needs of its community.

Council's role is focused on setting the strategic directions, financial parameters and ensuring financial performance is sustainable. The CEO is responsible for day to day management of the council's resources, ensuring the strategic priorities and services are in keeping with the council's financial policies, legislative requirements and delivered within budget.

The CEO (and administration) will provide necessary advice, information and support to council to manage resources responsibly. As a council member it is important to understand how to read financial reports. This will enable you to engage effectively in determining where council prioritises resources for the benefit of the community and monitor performance over time.



Financial risk

There is always risk associated with any level of financial responsibility. In local government risks include:

- level of council debt/gearing;
- commercial and entrepreneurial activities of the council management and maintenance of assets;
- management of current and future liabilities; and
- changes in the structure of the rates and charges base.

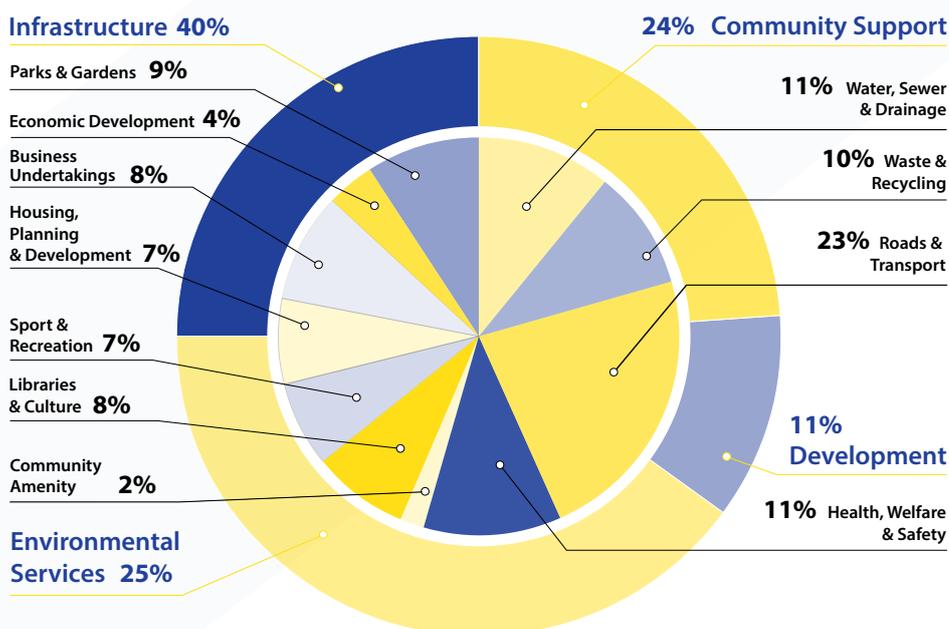
Financial risks typically occur when recurrent deficits are being reported with no trend of improvement, or capital is underspent to funding operating expenses. The high risk areas are usually:

- physical services – capital works, costings, plant acquisitions and disposal, and maintenance; and
- human services – grant funded services and, in particular, areas with casual employees.

Contracts and tenders

Councils engage with many suppliers to purchase goods and services and the supply of major essential services (e.g. waste and recycling collection services). It is a significant part of the councils operations and requires council to adopt policies on contracting and tendering to ensure accountable, transparent and value to the community in decision-making.

Council spending by function



Questions to ask:

What are the current financial parameters used in determining the budget?

This is important in understanding what has been already set by council for 2018-19 financial year.

Is there an operating surplus?

This is important for long term sustainability.

Is there adequate cash available?

This is important for short term sustainability. At the end of each financial year there must be at least enough cash to cover the provision for long service leave.

Is debt in control?

Ensure debt is used to create value (capital investment), not to fund operating (recurrent) costs.

Is working capital positive?

In other words, do current assets less current liabilities equal working capital.

Are capital works completed on time and to budget?

If not, how can we improve?

Emergency management

Council's role in emergency management

Emergency management is typically defined in terms of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, and councils make significant contributions to all four phases.

Councils have an important enabling role in emergency management because of their strong relationships with communities, knowledge of local hazards and risks, ability to leverage locally available resources and experience in mitigating, responding to and recovering from emergencies.

Under the *Local Government Act 1999* and the *Emergency Management Act 2004* councils must take measures to protect their area from natural and other hazards and to mitigate the effects of such hazards.

In an emergency, the State Emergency Centre through the relevant control agency takes control of the event and draws on the resources of local government as required through the Local Government Functional Support Group.

The LGA, through its Emergency Management Support Unit and Mutual Liability and Workers Compensation Schemes, provides a range of services, advice and coordination to support councils prepare for and deal with emergencies.

Council Member's role in emergency management

'Clear the way' - ensure the council executive is enabled and resourced to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergency events, in partnership with the community and other levels of government.

Strategic approaches - set a long term, holistic vision for emergency management that encompasses all phases of emergency management (prevention, preparedness, response and recovery), the wide range of emergency risks that the community may be exposed to, and emerging and longer-term emergency management related issues that may affect their communities.

Communicate with the community - establish clear communication pathways with the community to enable people to adequately prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, engender confidence in emergency services, and provide honest information in potentially difficult situations. It is important to recognise that operational (incident related) messages will be delivered by the control agency/emergency services.

During an emergency incident the LGA performs an operational role in ensuring that the Local Government Functional Support Group coordinates the response from local government and operates as required by the state emergency management plan (SEMP).

For more information on emergency management, please visit www.lga.sa.gov.au/emergencymanagement



effective

Effective leadership

Good governance

As your community's elected representative, you're responsible for ensuring decisions are made for the betterment of the whole community. Put simply, your leadership and good governance is about making decisions on behalf of your community and implementing those decisions effectively. It should, in fact, be at the heart of everything local government does.

Making decisions

Making strategic and effective decisions is central to your role as a council member. Strategic decision-making is the key responsibility of council. It underpins policy formulation and review of strategic management plans, annual business planning and monitoring councils' performance. Effective decision-making ensures that the decisions council makes are:

- relevant and important to the community;
- linked to the council plan and consistent with council policy;
- made with due consideration of options and impacts in line with relevant legislation and statutes;
- financially responsible and sustainable; and
- the result of open, transparent and accountable processes.

Constructive debate versus destructive conflict

Healthy, constructive debate is an integral part of good decision-making. It not only ensures that the widest possible range of views is heard but that every aspect of an issue is considered before decisions are made. Councils rarely make good decisions when there is either extreme conflict or continuous unquestioning agreement.

Code of Conduct - prevention to intervention

You should behave in a way that generates community trust and enhances the role and image of council and local government generally. You are expected to:

- act within the law at all times;
- act in good faith and not with improper or ulterior motives;
- act in a reasonable, just and non-discriminatory manner;
- undertake your role with reasonable care and diligence;
- conduct your ongoing relationships with other council members, council staff and the public with respect, courtesy, equality and sensitivity; and
- use information, provided or obtained, in a careful and prudent manner.

The Code of Conduct is important for helping councils govern more effectively. The Code of Conduct applies to all council members across local government. See part two of this guide for further information including the roles of the Ombudsman and the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption.

Your behaviour matters

As a leader in your community and a public figure, you have a responsibility to behave with integrity and honour. Your behaviour not only affects the way council is viewed by the general public, but it sets the tone for other council members – both inside and outside the council chamber. Your conduct in the council chamber is fundamental to your role as a council member. It's where you and your fellow council members have the power to make decisions as a council which will affect the shape and direction of your council area, now and into the future.

Community leadership

As a council member you are part of the system of government in Australia and a leader in your local community. You need to behave in a way that generates community trust and confidence, which will reflect positively on the council and the image of local government in general.

In the course of your duties you will interact with:

- individuals and groups in the community with a broad range of interest;
- council staff;
- state and Commonwealth politicians; and
- staff in government agencies.

When representing the council in the wider community you should be fair and honest and behave in a manner that facilitates constructive communication between council and other parties.

The *Local Government Act 1999* sets out the requirements of council members and it is your responsibility to be aware of these requirements particularly in relation to conflict of interest, the register of interests, the duties of public office and the Code of Conduct.

Being an elected representative

In tandem with your role as a community representative, you are the council's representative to the electors. You are expected to communicate to individuals and groups in the community about council policies, decisions and long-term plans, and to raise new ideas and propose changes to gauge community responses.

The achievement of good outcomes for the local area is dependent on a mature and constructive working relationship with other council members and council staff. Those relationships must respect diversity of opinion and the right of all points of view to be heard.

You should listen and respond to the views of the wider community, not just those of the people who elected you. This may include residents and ratepayers from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

Establishing community connections

It is helpful for you to become involved in local activities and consult with various local community groups. It is a good idea to establish early contact with various interest groups and invite them to keep in touch and attend relevant council events/meetings.

You may find it advantageous to establish a regular time dedicated to dealing with constituent's queries which you could then publicise, via your own social media channels or website.

You are likely to receive letters, emails and telephone calls from constituents. Some of these contacts will be to determine the reasons for various council decisions and policies; others will be about day-to-day operational activities of the council. It is important to understand that official correspondence and records you receive must be maintained by the council as a requirement of the *State Records Act 1997*. Speak to your CEO for more information.

Remember, if you do not have the information you need in order to respond to a constituent you should feel confident to say so and refer the enquiry through the appropriate channels. This will also help prevent you from giving incorrect advice or perhaps promising action that may subsequently be impossible to implement.

community
advocates

Council members are community advocates

To stay well informed you will need to seek views from all sections of the community about issues before the council. Once a decision has been made, you may need to explain why the council made the decision and any potential impacts.

As a community representative, you will be speaking on behalf of the community as a whole, so you must be sure that you present the broad views of all constituents not just sectional interests. It is important that you recognise the interests not only of those who elected you but those with no voting franchise, particularly young constituents, those of different cultural or ethnic backgrounds and minority groups that make up your community.

While you may have been elected by voters in one ward you are expected to represent the interests of all electors in the council area (residents, ratepayers and businesses) to be informed and to vote on all issues before the council.

You are also an advocate for your community, expected to bring to council any issues of concern to the community. However, rather than take direct action, councils may decide to take up broader community causes or concerns and act as an advocate for the community to state or Commonwealth government. This frequently occurs with issues that are outside direct local government control such as transport, hospitals, education etc.

Civic duties

The civic activities of a council are an important part of community leadership and the development of community identity. You will be invited to many community events and civic functions. At all times you must remember that you are present as a representative of the council and the community.

Communication between the community and the council

Communication between the community and the council improves decision making. A key theme underpinning the *Local Government Act 1999* is increased participation by local communities in the management of the affairs of their area. The focus of the legislation places responsibility on councils to involve communities in their decision making processes.

Communication, consultation and participation are important strategies that involve people contributing to decisions that affect their lives, recognising the right of citizens to have access to information and the right to respond. This process increases public confidence in council and its management of community resources.

However, it must be recognised that councils are required to exercise their powers and functions in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1999* and other relevant legislation and policy documents and the council will be constrained by legislation and other factors (for example, financial factors) in terms of the range of decisions that it is lawfully and properly able to make.

Effective public consultation also requires the council to adequately explain the legislative and other constraints on its decision-making powers to the community and to explain the scope of influence of the community in relation to the decision-making.

You won't need to know everything from the start, however, it is important that you have a strong interest in your community and a commitment to learning in order to grow into the role of a council member.

Public consultation policy

The principles of the *Local Government Act 1999* recognise the representative and decision-making role of councils and require them to conduct their business in a manner that is open, accountable and responsive to the needs and aspirations of communities. Councils are also required to prepare and adopt a public consultation policy and, when exercising particular powers and functions, must consult in accordance with that policy.

Public consultation strategies should:

- provide a reasonable opportunity for community members to access information and make submissions in relevant circumstances;
- provide adequate information (including information on legislative and other constraints) to enable community members to consider and contribute to the decision making process; and
- contain opportunities for involvement that are flexible; and ensure that, if a proposal changes in response to community feedback, consideration is given to whether a further round of consultation on the amended proposal is required.

For more information download the **Public Consultation - Model Policy** from www.lga.sa.gov.au/guidelines



Representation on external bodies

Council members may also be required to represent council on other bodies, for example, regional bodies, local organisations and school councils. This could also include representing local government at the state and national levels by involvement in the LGA. If you represent the council on external bodies you must understand:

- the relationship between the council and the external body;
- the legal and ethical responsibilities of the appointment to the body; and
- the nature of the body and where your prime duty and responsibility lie.

Media

You may find yourself being asked by the media to comment on topical issues. Check your council media policy because it may say that the mayor/chairperson and CEO are the official spokespersons and that they alone have been authorised to deal with the media on behalf of the council.

However, you do have the right to be heard as an individual and this is different from making official comment on behalf of the council.

You may have different views from other council members. In these circumstances, you must make it clear it is your personal view and not that of the council.

In the interests of council cohesion and having a productive, professional working relationship with fellow council members, staff and constituents, careful consideration should be taken not to engage in personal attacks.

Internal review of council decisions

Councils make decisions that impact on the lives and livelihoods of individuals, organisations and businesses in the council area and are accountable to the community for the decisions they make. The community has a right to know that the decisions have been made in an informed, responsible and just manner.

A council must have policies, practices and procedures for dealing with:

- any reasonable request for the provision of a service by the council or for the improvement of a service provided by the council; and
- complaints about the actions of the council, employees of the council, or other persons acting on behalf of council.

This provides access by the community to a fair process for raising grievances and complaints, with confidence that these matters will be dealt with objectively, fairly and in a timely manner.

Councils must ensure that copies of its internal review policies and procedures are available for inspection and purchase by the public.

The fact that a council has an internal review procedure does not prevent a person from making a complaint to the Ombudsman.

Training and professional development

As a council member you will no doubt bring a range of skills, experiences and attributes to your role. There will also be other areas where you'll need to develop new skills and knowledge. Your desire to make a difference and willingness to develop yourself as a leader (both personally and professionally) will be important in setting yourself up for success as a council member.

Councillor training and professional development

One of the challenges that all council members face is finding time for learning and development while managing a large workload. This is particularly true when you're new to the job. But it's worth making the time in order to grow professionally and personally. It makes it so much easier to fulfil your responsibilities and be a better councillor.

Induction program

Given the responsibilities of council members, it is important that you undertake a formal program of induction at the earliest opportunity. The CEO will arrange an orientation and induction process for a new council. This may include:

- further information about your role and responsibilities;
- general information about local government and specific information on how council operates;
- a tour of the council area and facilities;
- information on the organisational and operational structure including an overview of each of the functions or departments; and
- introduction to key staff members.

It is your responsibility to fully engage in the induction process and continue to seek appropriate learning opportunities. It is important that returning council members also engage in the induction program to share and build effective working relationships with new council members.

Elected member – mandatory training

Mandatory training must be undertaken by new council members. Modules cover the following topics:

- introduction to local government;
- legal responsibilities;
- council and committee meetings; and
- financial management and reporting.

The CEO and principal member have a joint responsibility to ensure that the mandatory training is undertaken.

The *Local Government Act 1999* requires each council to have a training and development policy for council members, designed to support and equip councillors to carry out their duties effectively. For returning council members these modules are useful as 'refresher' training given legislation and council member responsibilities can change over time.

LGA - we are here to help

The LGA provides mandatory elected member training and on-going professional development options for council members.

The LGA learning series is designed to provide fundamental skill development and enhancement of knowledge and abilities in a range of areas including:

- decision making and strategic planning;
- council finances;
- public speaking;
- meeting procedures;
- lobbying; and
- land use planning.

The council member development programs also provide accredited learning and leadership development opportunities for council members. Personal development is an ongoing journey and all council members will be provided with opportunities in accordance with the council's training and development policy.

The mandatory training program, council induction program and ongoing professional development opportunities will help you to develop the skills and knowledge needed to operate effectively on council.

A mandatory training program, council induction and ongoing professional development opportunities will help you to develop the skills and knowledge needed to operate effectively on council.

Learning accreditation

At the time of preparing this guide, the LGA was working towards establishing a nationally accredited learning and development program for elected members, based on the mandatory training modules. Further information on this program will be distributed to councils after the 2018 council elections.

Mayor/Chairperson leadership program

The LGA provides a leadership program for mayors/ chairpersons that will commence in November 2018. The program aims to assist mayors come to grips with their new and challenging role or support returning mayors refresh and share their learning with others. This program provides practical advice and shared learning to enhance the leadership skills required to be an effective mayor. This is part of a rolling program offered to mayors/ chairpersons on six monthly basis.

Elected Member leadership and development program

A comprehensive elected member leadership program will be offered from November 2018 with on-going professional development opportunities offered throughout the council term. This includes, an annual council members forum that features a mix of speakers and interactive workshops in exploring leadership effectiveness. The program maximises formal and informal interaction between council members (both new and returning members) to create shared learning and build support networks.

LGA Annual conference and dinner

The LGA annual conference is the peak forum for local government in South Australia, bringing together council members, CEOs and senior managers from around the state. The program features high profile speakers addressing key local government issues currently confronting the sector. Speakers regularly propose challenging ideas to stimulate discussion, extend the thinking of the sector, inspire new practices and improve performance.

Leadership development plan

Some of the leadership skills and qualities that will help you to be an effective council member are outlined on page 29 of this booklet.

As learning is an on-going experience, use this table as a guide to create your own leadership development plan and prioritise your on-going learning.

Allocating time to learn will help you feel more comfortable in your role and set you up for greater success as a council member.

For more information about LGA Learning and Development program, please visit www.training.sa.gov.au

Having a high level of self-awareness helped me to manage some of the challenges I faced as well as more effectively working with others on council.

Tip:

Finding a more experienced councillor (preferably from another council) to act as your mentor is probably one of the best things you can do in the first few months. Mentors can help you develop in your role as a councillor by offering you support, advice and, when you need it, a different perspective.

PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Do you...	Already possess ✓	Willing to develop ✓
Remain calm and respectful in all situations, even when you feel challenged or under pressure?		
Consider other people's culture, values and feelings and show compassion and empathy when making difficult decisions?		
Want to achieve great things for your community and make a positive difference?		
Communicate clearly and succinctly, employing respectful language and tone?		
Listen deeply, seeking to understand others?		

WORKING WITH OTHERS

Do you...	Already possess ✓	Willing to develop ✓
Manage relationships and work well with others to achieve desired outcomes?		
Engage respectfully in debates with others?		
Enjoy connecting with and learning from others?		
Ask questions, bring an open mind to decision making and admit when you don't know an answer or make a mistake?		
Carefully consider the evidence and different points of view presented by multiple stakeholders to make a decision in the best interest of the community?		

SKILLS

Do you...	Already possess ✓	Willing to develop ✓
Listening and communication		
Time management		
Analytical and strategic thinking		
Use of computers, mobile devices and other communication tools		
Community engagement		
Managing difficult conversations		
Public speaking		

READING PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS

Do you...	Already possess ✓	Willing to develop ✓
Have an awareness of the needs, motivations and values of other people?		
Have the ability to notice and understand other people's perspectives (regardless of whether or not you agree with them)?		
Make professional, well informed and ethical decisions in difficult circumstances?		
Have the ability to make informed decisions when presented with complex situations and multiple stakeholders from varying interest groups?		
Have the ability to make fact-based decisions rather than be influenced by emotions?		

STRATEGIC THINKING

Do you...	Already possess ✓	Willing to develop ✓
Interested in the world around you and keep track of long-term and current trends and how they may have an impact upon local plans and objectives?		
Able to articulate your clear vision or intent for serving your community and contributing to the greater good?		
Curious to understand, learn and consider all relevant facts and options when making a decision?		

KNOWLEDGE

Do you...	Already possess ✓	Willing to develop ✓
The needs and aspirations of your local council area and community		
Local government roles and responsibilities		
Budgeting and financial information		
Social justice principles		
Meeting procedures and principles of good governance		
Relevant legislation and policies		
Australia's political system		

Legal responsibilities of a council member

Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct for Council Members is prescribed in the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2013*. The Code of Conduct applies to all council members across the local government sector and may be the subject of a council investigation or an Ombudsman or Office of Public Integrity investigation, depending on the nature of the issue. The Code of Conduct includes findings which may be imposed by council on a council member where a breach of the Code is found to have occurred.

The Code of Conduct is comprised of three parts -

Part 1 - principles

These principles do not form independently enforceable standards but support the specific behaviours in Part 2 of the Code of Conduct and can be summarised as:

- commitment to service and discharge duties conscientiously;
- work together constructively;
- uphold the values of honesty, integrity, accountability and transparency;
- committed to considering all relevant information and opinions;
- take account of the diverse current and future needs of the local community;
- provide leadership and promote the interests of the council; and
- ensure current knowledge of statutory requirements and best practice relevant to the position.

Part 2 - behaviour

This part sets out specific behavioural expectation of council members. The opening statement states that the following behaviour areas are considered essential to upholding the principles of good governance in councils and address:

- general behaviour;
- responsibilities as a member of council;
- relationship with fellow council members;
- relationship with council staff; and
- requirement to report breaches of Part 3 of the Code.

Part 3 - misconduct

This part states that failure by a council member to comply with the standards regarding the following constitutes misconduct:

- member duties;
- gifts and benefits;
- register of interests;
- campaign donation returns;
- conflict of interest;
- misuse of council resources; and
- repeated or sustained breaches of Part 2 of the Code.

An appendix to the Code includes to which criminal penalties apply (and which matters should be reported to the Office of Public Integrity). Council members should familiarise themselves with the standards of behaviour and conduct expected and outlined in the Code.

Any person may make a complaint about a council member under Part 2 or Part 3 of the Code.

For more information download the **Code of Conduct for Council Members** from www.lga.sa.gov.au/guidelines



Local Government Governance Panel

The Local Government Governance Panel is an independent panel established by the LGA to assist councils to address complaints about council members, under Part 2 of the Code of Conduct.

Referrals to the panel must be made by councils, under the council's complaints handling procedure. The panel does not act on complaints directly from the public. Each council must have a complaints handling procedure in place, setting out how complaints against council members will be handled.

The panel does not look into allegations of misconduct under Part 3 of the Code, or fraud or corruption, as those complaints must be referred to the most appropriate authority, the Ombudsman or the Office of Public Integrity. The governance panel has an advisory role only and makes recommendations to councils on the appropriate action to take in response to a complaint, for the councils consideration.

For more information download the **Governance Panel Rules of Engagement** from www.lga.sa.gov.au/governancepanel



Independent Commissioner Against Corruption

All council members are 'public officers' for the purpose of the *Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2012* and have mandatory reporting requirements in certain circumstances. As a public officer, you must report to the Office of Public Integrity (OPI) any matter that you reasonably suspect involves corruption in public administration (unless you know that the conduct has already been reported to the OPI). As a public officer, you must also report to the OPI any matter that you reasonably suspect involves serious or systemic misconduct or maladministration (unless you know that the conduct has already been reported to the OPI). You must report to the OPI as soon as practicable after forming a reasonable suspicion.

For more information download the **Directions and Guidelines for Public Officers Independent Commissioner Against Corruption** from www.icac.sa.gov.au



Conflict of interest

Council members must make sure there is no conflict between their private interests and their public role as a decision maker.

Managing conflicts of interest and perceived conflicts of interest is integral to the accountability, transparency and effectiveness of local government. It is your responsibility to make sure you are aware of, understand and comply with sections 73, 74 and 75 and 75A of the *Local Government Act 1999* relating to conflict of interest. It is each council member's responsibility to identify where he or she has a material, actual or perceived conflict of interest and then act as required by the Act. To discharge this responsibility you need to be aware of the matters which are to come before a meeting and consider whether you have an interest which may give rise to a conflict in respect of any matter.

Comprehensive guidance on identifying a conflict of interest and taking the appropriate action is provided in LGAs Conflict of Interest Guidelines.

For more information download the **Conflict of Interest Guidelines** from www.lga.sa.gov.au/guidelines



Failure to comply with the requirements of the conflict of interest provisions can be subject to action in the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. You are encouraged to familiarise yourself with the legislation and interpretations provided in the LGA Conflict of Interest Guidelines and to talk to your CEO if you believe you may have a conflict on any matter.

Personal liability

You are not personally liable for the actions of council where the council is acting in good faith and is exercising its powers and functions under the *Local Government Act 1999*. No civil liability attaches to you as an individual for an honest act or omission arising from the discharge of your powers and duties. However, you do not have what is referred to as 'absolute privilege' protection afforded to members of state and Commonwealth parliaments. You must be careful not to make remarks that could result in an aggrieved person taking action against you personally for defamation. Council members can access professional liability cover as part of the Local Government Association Mutual Liability Schemes.

Register of interests

Council members are required to disclose their interests by completing a primary return after being elected and an ordinary return every year. The information submitted in the primary and ordinary returns is required to be entered into a register of interests maintained by the CEO.

The underlying philosophy of this requirement is that disclosure of private interests by council members promotes transparency and accountability.

Within six weeks of election to council for the first time, you must submit to the CEO a 'primary return'. Each subsequent year you must lodge an 'ordinary return' within 60 days of 30 June.

Councils have a standard prescribed form for council members to fill in for both the primary and ordinary returns. The returns must also include information about a person related to a council member. If a council member submits a return that, to his or her knowledge, is false or misleading, the council member is guilty of an offence and liable to a penalty.

If a council member fails to submit either a primary or ordinary return by the due date, the CEO must notify the member. If after one month from the due date the member has failed to submit the return, his or her office becomes vacant. The member may, within one month of the office becoming vacant, appeal on the grounds that the failure to submit the return was unavoidable.

The register of interests may be inspected by a member of the public at the principal office of the council. The council must publish on a website the following information from the register of interests in relation to each council member:

- the council member's income sources or employer;
- the name of any political party, any body or association formed for political purposes or any trade or professional association of which the council member is a member;
- and any gifts received by the council member that are required to be included in the register.

For more information download the **Guidelines for Primary and Ordinary Returns - Council Members** from www.lga.sa.gov.au/guidelines



Meeting Procedures

part TWO

This part is based on the relevant procedures and provisions of the *Local Government Act 1999* and it is intended to complement the meeting procedures codes of practice of individual councils (if any) and the LGAs comprehensive Meeting Procedures Handbook.

Council decision making

Decisions made at council meetings provide the direction and authority for action. At council meetings, council members decide the policy direction of the council and make decisions on statutory and organisational matters.

The council is a corporate body and as such it can make decisions only by resolution, passed by the required majority of members present. It may only make decisions about matters falling within its jurisdiction; otherwise it will be deemed to be acting 'ultra vires,' that is, acting beyond its powers.

How council meetings operate

The *Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations 2013* contain:

- interpretations and guiding principles that should be observed at a meeting;
- the provisions that apply to council meetings; and
- the provisions that apply to committee meetings performing regulatory activities.

Some meeting procedures also apply to meetings of council committees – see the Meeting Procedures Handbook for further details.

It is desirable that all council members have a copy the Meeting Procedures Handbook, Chapter 6 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, and the *Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations 2013* to refer to at council and committee meetings when necessary.

The meeting procedures contain requirements in relation to deputations, questions, personal statements, petitions, notices of motion, rescission motions and voting procedures of which you should be aware so that you can participate effectively in the meeting and debate.

Download the
**Meeting Procedures
Handbook for
Council Members** from
[www.lga.sa.gov.au/
guidelines](http://www.lga.sa.gov.au/guidelines)



Ordinary meetings

The *Local Government Act 1999* states council must hold an ordinary meeting at least once a month. The dates, times and places of meetings are chosen by council members.

Ordinary meetings of councils cannot be held on Sundays or public holidays. If a council is a municipal council (that is town, city or metropolitan) it may only hold an Ordinary council meeting before 5pm if the council unanimously resolves to do so.

The CEO must give notice of a meeting and provide an agenda for the meeting to all council members at least three clear days (includes Saturday and Sunday) before the date of the meeting.

Notice of meetings

A notice of an ordinary meeting must;

- be in writing;
- state the date, time and place of meeting;
- be signed by the CEO; and
- contain, or be accompanied by, the agenda for the meeting.

The notice may be given to council members:

- personally;
- by post or otherwise to the usual place of residence of the council member or to another place/s authorised by the council member in writing;
- by leaving the notice in an appropriate place at the principal office of the council if authorised by the council member to do so; or
- by a means authorised in writing by the council member as being an available means of giving notice, for example, email.

Meeting agendas

The agenda is a list of items of business to be considered at the meeting. The *Local Government Act 1999* requires that the CEO ensures that items on an agenda given to council members are:

- described with reasonable particularity and accuracy; and
- are supplied to each council member at the time the notice of a meeting is given, along with a copy of any documents or reports that are to be considered at the meeting.

The CEO may, after consultation with the principal member, indicate on a document or report supplied to council members any information contained in or arising from a document or report that may, if the council so determines, be considered in confidence under Part 3 of the Act. The CEO is to specify the basis on which an order could be made.

A copy of the notice of meeting and the agenda must be placed on public display at each office of the council that is open to the public and on the council's website. Reports associated with the agenda will also be posted unless they have been deemed in confidence before consideration by the council.

Any person is entitled to inspect the notice of meeting and the agenda and, on payment of a fee, obtain a copy.

Special meetings of council

The *Local Government Act 1999* sets out the procedure by which special meeting may be held. The CEO must call a special meeting of the council at the request of:

- the principal member;
- at least three council members; or
- a council committee meeting at which at least three council members vote in favour of the making of the request.

The CEO must be provided with an agenda for the special meeting at the time the request is made. If the agenda is not provided the request has no effect. The CEO must give each council member notice of the special meeting at least four hours before the scheduled start of the meeting.

The CEO must call a special meeting of a committee at the request of:

- the presiding member; or
- at least two members of the committee.

Special meetings of committees may be held at any time. The CEO must ensure that committee members receive the notice of the meeting at least four hours before the start of the meeting.

Quorum

A quorum is the number of council members who must be at the meeting to enable it to start and/or continue. The quorum for a council meeting is determined by dividing the total number of council members (currently in office) by two, ignoring any fraction, and adding one.

Council meetings must start as soon as possible after the appointed time if a quorum is present. If after 30 minutes from the appointed meeting time a quorum is not present the presiding member (or, in the absence of the presiding member, the CEO) must adjourn the meeting and set a specified day and time to reconvene.

Voting at meetings

Decisions at council meetings are decided by a majority of the votes of the council members present at the meeting and entitled to vote. Voting is generally by a show of hands. Each council member present at the meeting must vote on any matter for decision, except for the mayor elected by electors or in cases where a council member is precluded from doing so by the *Local Government Act 1999* due to a conflict of interest.

You are not allowed to abstain from voting – there is a duty to be present and a duty to vote on decisions before the council.

Mayor's vote

The mayor (elected by electors) or a person acting as the mayor does not have a deliberative vote. However, if the number of deliberative votes for and against an issue is even then she or he has a casting vote.

Chairperson's vote

If a council has a chairperson, he or she must exercise a deliberative vote on a question simultaneously with the other council members. A chairperson has only a deliberative vote and no casting vote.

A deliberative vote means a vote that expresses an individual's opinion on a matter being deliberated.

A casting vote means a vote that is exercised in the event of an equality of votes.

Council members who understand the meeting procedures will be able to represent their electors more effectively at meetings

Public access to meetings

Section 90(1) of the *Local Government Act 1999* provides that a meeting of a council or council committee must be conducted in a place open to the public.

The *Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations 2013* contains the guiding principle that “procedures should encourage appropriate community participation in the affairs of the council”.

One of the fundamental means of enabling community participation is to encourage attendance at meetings of council and committees. This can only occur when meetings are open to the public.

In limited circumstances a council or council committee may resolve that the public be excluded from a meeting where the council or committee considers it necessary and appropriate to close the meeting to the public in order to receive, discuss or consider in confidence any information or matter that is of a kind listed in section 90(3) of the *Local Government Act 1999*. The resolution to close the meeting must specify the grounds for closing the meeting. All members of the public (including staff), unless exempted by name in the resolution as entitled to remain (e.g. where there is an expert witness), are required to leave the room.

Where members of a council or council committee (with or without staff), gather informally to discuss a matter that is, or is intended to be, part of a formal meeting of the council, the informal gathering must be open to the public, unless the CEO has declared it to be a confidential informal discussion. Other informal gatherings, such as to undertake training or hold workshops, do not need to be open to the public.

One of the most important roles you will have as a council member is to participate in making policy decisions. - establishing the rules, regulations and guidelines by which your community is governed - within the parameters of laws set by State Parliament.

¹ See, regulation 8 of the *Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations 2013* for more detail

Minutes of the meeting

Under the *Local Government Act 1999* the CEO must ensure that minutes are kept of proceedings at every meeting of the council or a council committee.

The minutes are not a verbatim record of everything said, they are a record of decisions reached.¹

Each council member must, within five days after a council or committee meeting, be supplied with a copy of the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting.

The minutes of a meeting are to be confirmed at the next meeting subject to any amendments of a factual nature. Decisions to take action resolved at a meeting and recorded in the minutes are not delayed until the minutes are confirmed.

For more information download the *Minute Takers Handbook* from www.lga.sa.gov.au/guidelines



Public access to minutes

Minutes of council meetings are made publicly available. Within five days of a meeting of council or a committee, the minutes must be placed on public display, for one month, at the council's principal office.

A person is entitled to inspect:

- the minutes of a council or committee meeting;
- reports to the council or committee meeting received at a meeting of the council or committee;
- recommendations presented to council in writing and adopted by resolution of the council; and
- budgetary or other financial statements adopted by council.

Copies of minutes

A member of the public may obtain, on payment of a fee, a copy of any of the above documents. The public cannot access any documents, or part of a document, that is ordered confidential.

The *Local Government Act 1999* provides that a council must not make an order to prevent the disclosure of:

- the remuneration or conditions of service of staff of the council after the remuneration or conditions have been set or determined;
- certain information about a successful tender for the supply of goods or services or any reasons why they were selected;
- the amount or amounts payable by the council under a contract for the supply of goods or services, after the contract has been entered into by all parties to the contract; and
- the identity of land that has been acquired or disposed of by the council, or any reasons why land has been acquired or disposed.

If an order is made to keep a document confidential the council or committee must:

- specify the duration of the order or the circumstances in which the order will cease to apply, and review the order at least every 12 months; and
- ensure that a note is made in the minutes recording the making of the order, the grounds on which the order was made and the duration of the order.

DECISION MAKING CHECKLIST	
When making decisions it may be helpful to ask yourself these types of questions:	X ✓
Is this in the best interests of the community?	
Do I have all the information I need to make an informed decision?	
Are there any legal impediments to participating in this decision?	
Is this consistent with council's strategic management plans?	
Have I considered other options and different viewpoints and reached a decision objectively?	
Is this a relevant issue for local government?	

Preparation for meetings

You have the responsibility to be well informed in relation to any business that is before the council. The staff, through the CEO, provides input into the decision making process by providing advice and information, normally in the form of council reports and recommendations, based on specialist skills and knowledge.

Reading agendas and reports thoroughly is vital. If uncertain about information in an agenda or report you should discuss it with other members and/or obtain information from the CEO or relevant council officer before the meeting.

You will need to:

- set aside a specific time before each meeting in which to read the agenda;
- follow up any questions before the meeting;
- seek clarification and/or additional information from the CEO or relevant council staff member;
- if appropriate, seek out local residents' opinions on issues to be discussed at the meeting; and
- do your own research to supplement the information in reports before the council meeting.

Informal gatherings

The *Local Government Act 1999* also enables councils to hold informal gatherings of council or committee members and staff to allow for discussion, undertake planning, deliver training, hold workshops or to encourage informal communication between councillors and staff. These gatherings are not formal council meetings and therefore no decisions can be made at these times. Where the informal gathering involves discussion of a matter that is, or is intended to be, part of a formal meeting of the council, the gathering must be open to any member of the public, unless the council or CEO has declared it to be a confidential informal discussion.

Download the *Informal Gatherings Model Policy* from www.lga.sa.gov.au/guidelines



The Local Government Association (LGA)

part
THREE

The LGA is recognised as the peak representative body for local government in South Australia.

Advocating

to achieve greater influence for local government in matters affecting councils and communities

Advancing

local government through best practice and continuous improvement.

Assisting

member councils to build capacity and increase sustainability through integrated and coordinated local government

Our Values

Our Organisational Behaviour

Our Individual Behaviour

V



Value and Respect

We engage with, and have confidence and trust in the ability and judgement of all of our staff.
We provide regular, honest and constructive feedback.

I am considerate of others' priorities and workloads.
I communicate with respect and am approachable, professional and polite.

O



Optimism

We recognise the importance of a positive work/life balance.
We recognise the best qualities in our staff and harness all abilities.

I always look for the positive opportunity, even when challenged.

I



Integrity

We are consistent in decision making and are honest when dealing with staff and stakeholders.

I uphold the values of the LGA and adhere to my workplace responsibilities.

C



Connected

We provide a safe, supportive and informative workplace with clear and regular communication.
We commit to removing barriers that impact on effective work practices.

I welcome opportunities to engage with others and build positive working relationships.

E



Excellence

We empower, support and encourage our staff.
We lead toward clear and inspiring goals and vision.

I am a leader and role model through my actions and behaviour.
I value everyone equally.
I am a driver of constructive change.

General meetings

Each year under its constitution the LGA conducts an Ordinary General Meeting (OGM) and an Annual General Meeting (AGM). These meetings are for member councils to determine the policy direction of its Association. Each council appoints a delegate to vote at these meetings with votes weighted relative to each council's population.

The LGA Board

The role of the LGA Board is to oversee the corporate governance of the LGA and provide strategic direction and leadership. The Board manages the activities of the LGA in between General Meetings in accordance with policy and other decisions taken at Ordinary and Annual General Meetings and to report annually on those activities.

In addition to the Board, there are two regional organisations of members: South Australian Region Organisation of Councils (SAROC) and Greater Adelaide Region Organisation of Councils (GAROC). The role of SAROC and GAROC is regional advocacy, policy initiation and review, leadership, engagement and capacity building in the regions.

All councils have the opportunity to nominate and elect regional representatives to SAROC and GAROC, which in turn nominate their representatives on the Board.

The LGA Board and the LGA Secretariat are essential in providing policy leadership to local government.



The LGA secretariat

The secretariat, led by the CEO, carries out the decisions of the Board and General Meetings. The secretariat maintains close contact with councils and consults with council members, council staff and professional organisations on specific issues. The duties of the secretariat include:

- liaising with government agencies on sector-wide issues on behalf of councils;
- lobbying members of Parliament in accordance with LGA Board directions;
- working with the media to improve understanding of Local Government;
- undertaking research to assist in policy development and decision making;
- supporting local government and LGA enterprises;
- developing codes and guidelines designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of council operations;
- providing information to councils;
- providing councils with education and training support;
- offering advisory services; and
- assisting with general inquiries from councils and the public.

Local Government Research and Development Scheme

The LGA administers the Local Government Research and Development Scheme, which funds research projects to benefit the local government sector.

For further information visit:
www.lga.sa.gov.au/research

Local Government Enterprises

There are a range of LGA owned or affiliated local government enterprises that offer substantial economic or other benefits to councils, including:

- **LGASA Mutual Pty Ltd**

LGASA Mutual Pty Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of the LGA that operates the insurance and indemnity schemes - Mutual Liability Scheme and Workers Compensation Scheme.

These schemes provide insurance and indemnity cover for all 68 councils against potential and actual civil liability and workers compensation claims.

For further information visit:

www.lgrs.com.au

- **LGCS Pty Ltd (trading as LGA Procurement)**

LGA Procurement is also a wholly owned subsidiary of the LGA that partners with councils to save time and money, and reduce risk in relation to procurement activities. LGA Procurement delivers specialised services across four main areas - contracts, consultancy, procurement resources, and professional development.

For further information visit:

www.lgaprourement.sa.gov.au

- **LGASA Commercial Solutions**

LGASA Commercial Solutions are a team of staff within the secretariat that work collaboratively with councils to innovate, improve efficiencies and save costs through the aggregation of services at reduced rates. Currently, LGA Commercial Solutions offers LGASA Legal Connect, LGASA Travel and LGASA Energy. Further commercial opportunities are in development.

For further information visit:

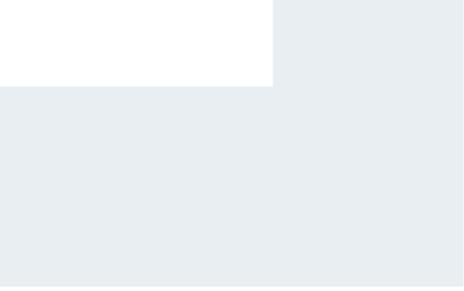
www.lga.sa.gov.au/commercialsolutions

Local Government Finance Authority

Local Government Finance Authority is a statutory authority that provides investment and lending solutions to councils.

For further information visit:

www.lgfa.com.au





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