

Circular Details	Circular No 18-46 / 18 December 2018 / A621298
Previous Circular	<i>18-25 Status of the new Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines</i>
Who should read this	Mayors / Councillors / General Managers / Council governance staff
Contact	Council Governance Team/ 02 4428 4100/ olg@olg.nsw.gov.au
Action required	Council to implement

New Councillor Induction and Professional Development Requirements

What's new or changing

- Amendments made to the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) by the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Act 2016* in August 2016 saw the inclusion in the prescribed role of councillors under section 232 a responsibility “to make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform the role of a councillor”.
- In support of this, regulations have been made for induction and other professional development for mayors and councillors. The new requirements under the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* are outlined in the attachment to this circular. These requirements do not apply to joint organisations.
- The Office of Local Government (OLG) has prepared guidelines to assist councils to develop and deliver induction and ongoing professional development activities for their mayor and councillors in compliance with the proposed regulations. The Guidelines have been issued under section 23A of the Act.

What this will mean for your council

- Councils’ induction and professional development programs are to consist of three elements:
 - *Pre-election candidate sessions* – these are to ensure prospective candidates are aware of what will be expected of them if elected (these are not mandatory but are encouraged)
 - *Induction program* – this aims to equip mayors and councillors with the information they need to perform their role effectively over the first few months and has a particular focus on building positive, collaborative relationships between councillors and with staff
 - *Professional development program* – this is to be developed in consultation with all councillors and delivered over the term of the council to build the skills, knowledge and personal attributes necessary to be an effective mayor or councillor.
- Councils will be required to report information in their annual reports on the induction and ongoing professional development activities offered to the mayor and each councillor. The reporting requirements are set out in the attachment to this circular.

Key points

- Councils will need to take immediate steps to develop and deliver a professional development program for the mayor and each councillor.
- Councils will need to deliver an induction program for any councillor elected at a by-election before the next ordinary elections.
- Councils will be required to prepare and deliver an induction program for the mayor and all councillors following the next ordinary elections.
- From next year, councils will be required to report on councillor induction and professional development in their annual reports.

Where to go for further information

- The Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines are available on OLG's website at www.olg.nsw.gov.au.
- For further information, contact OLG's Council Governance Team on (02) 4428 4100.



Tim Hurst
Chief Executive

Attachment**The new councillor induction and professional development requirements under the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005***

- The general manager is to ensure an induction program is delivered for newly elected and returning councillors and a specialised supplementary induction program for the mayor within six months of their election.
- The general manager is to ensure an ongoing professional development program is delivered for the mayor and each councillor over the term of the council for the purposes of assisting them to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform their role.
- The content of the ongoing professional development program to be delivered to the mayor and councillors is to be determined in consultation with the mayor and each councillor and is to have regard to the specific skills required by the mayor, each individual councillor and the governing body as a whole to perform their roles.
- Mayors and councillors must make all reasonable efforts to participate in the activities offered to them as part of an induction or ongoing professional development program.
- Councils are to publish the following information in their annual reports:
 - the name of the mayor and each individual councillor that completed council's induction program (where an induction program has been delivered during the relevant year)
 - the name of the mayor and each councillor who participated in any ongoing professional development program during the year
 - the number of training and other activities provided to the mayor and councillors during the year as part of a professional development program, and
 - the total cost of induction and professional development activities and any other training provided to the mayor and councillors during the relevant year.
- The above requirements do not apply to joint organisations.