

79. Councillor Administrative Support Policy

Purpose

This policy will ensure accountability in respect to the assistance provided to Councillors in carrying out their responsibilities as elected representatives in an open and transparent manner.

Scope

This policy applies to the elected Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors and Administrative Support Staff of Douglas Shire Council (DSC).

Policy Content

Part of the Queensland Government's rolling reform agenda in the local government sector includes new legislation for administrative support staff.

Councillors directing Administrative Support Staff

In relation to administrative support staff, a new section of the Act includes:

170AA Guidelines about the provision of administrative support to Councillors

1. The Chief Executive Officer of a local government may make guidelines about the provision of administrative support by local government employees to a councillor.
2. The Guidelines must include –
 - a. When a council may be provided with administrative support by a local government employee; and
 - b. How and when a councillor may give direction to a local government employee in relation to the provision of administrative support; and
 - c. A requirement that a councillor may give a direction to a local government employee only if the direction relates directly to administrative support to be provided by the local government employee to the councillor under guidelines.
3. A direction purportedly given by a councillor to a local government employee is of no effect if the direction does not comply with the guidelines.

Providing Support Staff for Councillors

The following DSC employees Support Staff positions and resources are specifically provided in direct support of Councillors and their functions.

- Mayor and Councillor Support Officer – Provision for the Mayor and Councillors of a Part time Council staffed Support Officer with the Office of the Mayor
- Executive Assistant – Provision for Councillors for access to the services of a Council Executive Support Officer position with the Office of the CEO
- Records Management Officer – Provision for Councillors for access to the services of records management
- Senior Media and Communications Officer – Provision for the Mayor for communications services from the People and Community Services Department

As well as the above, ad hoc support staff may include but not be limited to the below as assistance to Councillors:

- Co-ordination of committees or groups that Councillors Chair or are members of as part of their Council appointed roles.
- Co-ordination of community consultation sessions or community meeting sessions attended by Councillors.
- Other Council appointed or directed task allocated to Councillors and for which ad hoc support is needed

The following tasks may be directed by a Councillor to Support Staff, and include but are not limited to:

- Answering telephone calls
- Managing appointments calendar
- Photocopying, printing, and ordering stationery
- Liaising with Council about office maintenance or health and safety issues on behalf of the Councillor
- Room or travel bookings e.g., booking Council vehicle or meeting rooms
- Logging CRM for services from the community e.g., request for street or park maintenance
- Locating information for Councillors such as legislation, information from Council's website or other sources
- Assisting the Mayor with communication to the community through emails, e-newsletters, informational advice flyers or other similar mediums, if the communication is objective, factual, informational, business as usual and an efficient use of funds.

Except in exceptional circumstances, and if approved and arranged in advance, any Support Staff services will be –

- Within standard working hours
- Shared between multiple Councillors

For any urgent out of standard hours services or requests contact should be made via the CEO and or applicable Manager and not initially directly with the Support Officer.

When a request for advice or information is received that is considered to be outside the scope of a Councillor's official duties or a request for advice or information is received which, upon consideration, will take a significant amount of resources to satisfy or cause an undue impact on the Support Staff, as per the Acceptable Request Guidelines Policy, the matter is to be escalated to the CEO to make a decision as to whether it is considered that the fulfilment of the request is required to allow the Councillor to perform their duties.

Councillor Support Staff cannot assist with the Councillor's re-election or other 'campaigning' tasks.

Should a Councillor have concerns or dissatisfied with their Support Staff they must submit their concerns directly to the CEO who are responsible for managing support staff.

Complaints

A Councillor's failure to follow any Council Policy regarding Support contravenes the behaviour standards set out under the Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland and is considered inappropriate conduct. DSC Employees including support staff, other Councillors or members of the community may lodge complaints about suspected inappropriate conduct to the Office of the Independent Assessor.

Telephone: 13 620 722

Via Email: OIAcomplaints@oia.qld.gov.au

Human Right Complaints

When an individual feels that they are subject to Douglas Shire Councils failure to act compatibly with human rights, they can make a complaint directly to Douglas Shire Council. These complaints will be assessed against the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Act	Shall mean the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
Councillors	Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors.
Councillor Administrative Support Staff (Support Staff)	An employee of Douglas Shire Council who assists the Mayor and Councillors in meeting the responsibilities of their roles.
Douglas Shire Council Employee	All persons employed by Douglas Shire Council on a permanent, temporary, or casual basis and includes persons engaged under a contract of service and volunteers.
DSC	Douglas Shire Council

Related Legislation

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulation 2012

Electoral and other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity, and other Matters) Act 2020

Information Privacy Act 2009

Public Sector Ethics Act 2004

Human Rights Act 2019

Related Documents

The Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland

Employee Code of Conduct

Acceptable Request Guidelines Policy

Expense Reimbursement – Councillors Policy

Investigation Policy

Caretaker Period Policy

Policy Review

This policy is to be reviewed whenever legislation changes, or every 2 years if no changes have been required to be enacted, at the direction of the Chief Executive Officer.

Policy Details

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Link to Corporate Plan	Robust Governance and Efficient Service Delivery
Revoked/Superseded	

This policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.