

Policy Type	Corporate
Function	Governance
Policy Owner	Chief Executive Officer
Policy Contact	Chief Executive Officer
Effective Date	25 March 2025

Purpose

Councillors are responsible for providing leadership to the local government and the community. They have a fundamental responsibility to serve the interests of the community and make considered and well-informed decisions in the public interest. To successfully uphold this responsibility, it is vital that Councillors prepare for, attend, and participate in Council Meetings, Workshops, Training and other functions. This policy outlines Burdekin Shire Council's expectations of a Councillor to carry out their responsibilities in relation to attendance at meetings to ensure compliance with the Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland.

Scope

This policy gives direction to Councillors regarding the application of Section 1.1 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland, that is:

“Carry out RESPONSIBILITIES conscientiously and in the best interest of the local government and the community.

For example, councillors will, at a minimum, have the following responsibilities:

- 1.1 Attend and participate meaningfully in all local government meetings, committee meetings, informal meetings, relevant workshops and training opportunities to assist them in fulfilling their roles other than where prior leave of absence is given.”*

Policy Statement

Determination of Meetings (Date, time, location, agenda)

Council's schedule of Ordinary Meetings and Council Workshops is determined by resolution at the end of each year for the next calendar year. In accordance with Section 254C of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* notice of each meeting, and the agenda, will be given to each Councillor at least 2 days before the day of the meeting unless it is impracticable to give the notice before that time.

In accordance with Section 268 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, committee meetings will be held at the times and places decided by each committee.

Authority to Amend or Cancel Meetings

The Chief Executive Officer is authorised to change the date of an approved meeting or cancel a meeting, subject to consultation with the Chairperson of the meeting. If the meeting date is changed, attendance at the rescheduled meeting is not mandatory for Councillors.

Attendance

Attendance at, and full participation in, Council meetings is the highest order of business required by a Councillor and unless special circumstances exist, all councillors should attend all Council Meetings, Council workshops, Budget Meetings and other relevant committee meetings.

All meetings will record the attendance of Councillors via an attendance sheet or meeting minutes, whichever is suitable for the type of meeting.

Councillor attendance via telephone or web link

Council may allow a Councillor to participate in a Council Meeting or Workshop via telephone or web link when there are good reasons why the Councillor can only participate by that method. Councillors should seek permission ahead of time. Virtual attendance should be arranged in advance, ensuring appropriate access to meeting materials and compliance with any procedural or legislative requirements related to remote participation.

Formal Leave of Absence

Applications by Councillors for formal Leave of Absence from Council commitments (i.e. recreation leave or sick leave) are to be provided in writing to the Chief Executive Officer.

Applications are required to include the following information, as a minimum:

- Period of leave sought (dates from beginning to end).
- Reason for absence (e.g. Holiday, Health, Family, Work-related).
- Expected number of Ordinary Council Meetings and Council Workshops held during the applicable period of leave.
- Any meetings, briefings or other functions conducted by Council during the requested period of leave which the Councillor would otherwise be attending if not for the requested period of leave.

All Leave of Absence applications will be presented to a Council Meeting for consideration, as soon as practicable, to ensure the request is dealt with in a timely manner.

Recreation Leave - Councillors may apply for up to four (4) weeks of recreation leave during each year of their term. For clarity, the four (4) weeks of leave does not equate to 20 working days but instead refers to absences that may include a maximum of four (4) Council meetings and/or Council workshops per year.

Any recreation leave not taken within a given year will **not** carry over to subsequent years.

Sick Leave - Councillors may apply for up to 10 days of sick leave annually to ensure they can prioritise their health and well-being while fulfilling their responsibilities as elected representatives.

The use of sick leave must be genuine and in accordance with the intent of these provisions. Any discernible patterns of sick leave, such as regularly taking leave immediately before or after scheduled Council Meetings, or in a manner that suggests an avoidance of official duties, will not be accepted. Councillors are expected to act with integrity in their use of sick leave entitlements.

In circumstances where a Councillor experiences a serious illness or other extenuating health conditions requiring an extended period of sick leave, the Councillor should notify the Chief Executive Officer as soon as practicable and provide appropriate documentation, such as medical certificates. Councillors facing such circumstances are encouraged to reflect on their capacity to fulfill their ongoing responsibilities as an elected representative. If a Councillor determines that they are unable to meet the expectations of their role due to prolonged illness or incapacity, they should consider stepping down from their position in the best interest of the community and the effective functioning of the Council.

Any sick leave not taken within a given year will **not** carry over to subsequent years.

Years

For the purposes of this policy, a “year” will commence on 1 April and finish on 31 March to align with the election cycle.

Refusal

Leave of Absence applications may be refused for any of the following reasons:

- The Councillor has already exhausted recreation leave or sick leave provisions, or
- The approval of the application would cause a loss of quorum, or
- The application is for more leave than the Councillor is entitled to, or
- The application for leave does not provide adequate information.

Remuneration

A Councillor’s remuneration shall not be affected if an approved leave of absence has been granted in accordance with this policy.

Complaints

Complaints relating to non-attendance at meetings or non-participation at meetings will be managed as per the Complaints Management Policy and Councillor Complaints Investigation Policy.

Risk Management

The Councillor Attendance Policy is designed to ensure that the elected representatives of the Council fulfill their governance responsibilities by maintaining consistent and transparent attendance at Council meetings. Effective risk management underpins this policy by identifying and mitigating risks associated with non-compliance or inconsistent attendance.

Legislation

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulation 2012

Definitions and Abbreviations

Meeting	Means the ordinary meaning of the word and includes any Council meetings, committee meetings, advisory group meetings, briefings, Council workshops, and training opportunities.
Recreation Leave	Approved leave of absence to attend to personal matters, rest and recharge. Aimed at supporting work-life balance.
Sick Leave	Approved leave of absence due to illness, injury, or a medical condition. Approved sick leave may also be used as carer’s leave to care for an immediate family member (spouse, parent, sibling, or child) of the Councillor.

Related Documents

Reference Number	Document Title
N/A	Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland
GOV-POL-0016	Investigation of Suspected Conduct Breach by Councillor Policy

Document History and Version Control

Title of Document	Councillor Attendance Policy
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