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Ipswich City Council (Council) plays a key role within the City of Ipswich and as such Councillors and senior Council officers may be required to represent Council at official functions.

1. Purpose and Principles

Under the *Local Government Act 2009*, part of Council's responsibilities are:

- Sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure and delivery of effective services;
- Democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement.

As part of a Councillor's civic responsibilities they are often required to attend official functions as a representative of the City. These occasions are seen as an opportunity for Councillors to join with the community to celebrate, recognise achievements/milestones and promote the City.

Councillors and senior Council officers may also be invited to attend events or conferences/courses/seminars or workshops as guest speakers to share their expertise in a particular field. This interaction with peer groups, government organisations and community groups is encouraged as it allows Council to build positive networks that are beneficial to the growth and sustainability of the City.

2. Strategic Plan Links

This policy aligns with the following iFuture 2021-2026 Corporate Plan themes:

- Vibrant and Growing
- Safe, Inclusive and Creative
- Natural and Sustainable
- A Trusted and Leading Organisation

3. Regulatory Authority

Local Government Act 2009
Public Sector Ethics Act 1994
Employee Code of Conduct

Local Government Regulation 2012
Councillor Code of Conduct
Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy

4. Human Rights Commitment

Ipswich City Council (Council) has considered the human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)* (the Act) when adopting and/or amending this policy. When applying this policy, Council will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and give proper consideration to a human right relevant to the decision in accordance with the Act.

5. Scope

This policy provides guidelines on the attendance of Councillors and senior Council officers who may be required to attend an official function/conference/seminar/delegation as a representative of Ipswich City Council and the City of Ipswich.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

All Councillors and senior Council officers who are invited to attend functions/conferences/seminars/delegations in their official capacity as a representative of Ipswich City Council and the City of Ipswich are required to act in a manner that upholds the principles of integrity, transparency and ethical behaviour.

This policy operates in addition to all other obligations as outlined in the documents identified in the section 4 “Regulatory Authority” of this policy.

7. Protocol for Councillor Invitations

- The Mayor is the principal representative of Council and all Councillors support the Mayor.
- The Deputy Mayor will substitute for the Mayor at a function or event when the Mayor is unable to attend.
- Should neither the Mayor or Deputy Mayor be available to attend, the Mayor is responsible for delegating attendance at a function to another Councillor, taking into consideration whether the function is associated with a group or committee to which a Councillor has been appointed as Council’s representative.
- Councillors may receive invitations directly from community groups or organisations because of their involvement with the group/organisation. It is the responsibility of each Councillor to provide a copy of all invitations, including details of their own attendance, to the Mayoral Administrative Support Pool to ensure that the Mayor is cognisant of all requests for civic involvement in events.

8. Partner/Guest Event Attendance

The attendance of Partners or Guests at an official function is undertaken in accordance with the provisions contained in the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy.

9. Consideration of Conflicts of Interest

It is the Councillor/Senior Council Officer’s responsibility to evaluate all invitations for potential conflicts of interest that may affect their ability to impartially make decisions in their normal course of business in the role that they undertake as representatives of Ipswich City Council and the City of Ipswich.

10. Councillor Attendance at Conferences/Seminars/Delegations

Councillors wishing to attend a conference/seminar/delegations are required to submit a request in writing ensuring adequate lead time is given for approval by the relevant officer. The following approval is required:

- Local and Interstate Travel – Chief Executive Officer approval
- International – A resolution of Council

To ensure that Council receives the maximum benefit conference/seminar/delegation, the Councillor is required to provide a written report to the next meeting of Council outlining the key outcomes of the conference/seminar/delegation and its benefits to the City of Ipswich.

Should multiple Councillors attend the same conference/seminar/delegation, they are to collaborate and provide a joint report to Council.

11. Council Officer Attendance at Conferences/Seminars

Council staff invited to attend a conference/seminar/delegation as a representative of Council are required to submit a request in writing ensuring adequate lead time is given for approval by the relevant officer. The following approval is required:

- Local and Interstate Travel – General Manager approval
- Local and Interstate Travel (General Manager) – Chief Executive Officer approval
- International Travel – A resolution of Council

To ensure that Council receives the maximum benefit conference/seminar/delegation, the Council officer is required to provide a written report to the relevant General Manager or Chief Executive Officer outlining the key outcomes of the conference/seminar/delegation and its benefits to the City of Ipswich.

For attendance at significant conference/seminar/delegation or events that require interstate or overseas travel, officers are required to provide a report to Council.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Councillors are regularly invited to celebrate milestone events with the community.
- Councillors' calendar events are managed appropriately to allow them to perform their civic responsibilities as representatives of the City.
- Councillors and Senior Council Officers are given the opportunity to build positive networks which are beneficial to the City through invitations to take on the role of guest speakers at conferences and other formal events.
- Councillors and Senior Council Officers are given the opportunity to attend conferences/seminars and delegations that are relevant to their roles whilst maintaining transparency and good governance standards by providing written reports to Council on the benefits to the City.

13. Definitions

Councillor: All elected representatives including the Mayor

Official Function: Any event where a Councillor or Senior Council Officer has been invited to attend in their official capacity as a representative of Ipswich City Council and the City of Ipswich.

14. Policy Owner

The General Manager (Corporate Services) is the owner of this policy and the Corporate Governance Manager is responsible for the authoring and reviewing of this policy.