

LORD MAYOR

Policy No. 018

1 Purpose

This policy provides a framework for the Office of Lord Mayor in relation to protocols associated with the Office and Council's administrative arrangements.

The Policy addresses the following protocols:

- Committing the Council or its resources
- Relations with the media and public
- Ex Officio involvement with community groups
- Community Committees
- Functions
- Communicating with staff
- Acting Lord Mayor
- Lord Mayoral alternate

The Policy also addresses the following administrative processes:

- Lord Mayoral correspondence
- Lord Mayor's travel
- Partner's travel expenses
- Lord Mayor's vehicle

2 Scope

To establish protocols associated with the Office of the Lord Mayor and guide Council's administration to ensure compliance with legislative requirements.

3 Policy Statement

The role of the Lord Mayor or Principal Member is defined in Section 43 of the Local Government Act (the Act). In accordance with Section 44 of the Act, Council has endorsed the election of the Lord Mayor to the office at future Council elections.

This Policy is designed to provide a framework for the operational aspects associated with the Office of Lord Mayor and its interaction with Council's administration.

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5	22\0455	27/02/2018		27/02/2022



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Committing the Council or Council Resources

In accordance with the Act, an elected member has no direct authority to:

- commit the Council to a course of action, or to
- commit Council resources, including staff time

before getting Council approval.

The Lord Mayor can request the Chief Executive Officer to list an item on the Agenda at a forthcoming meeting for consideration by Council in order to progress the development of an idea, project or proposal. Council can then determine the appropriate action which may include calling for a report.

Relations with the Media and the Public

Media

The Act specifies that one of the roles of the Lord Mayor is to speak on behalf of the Council as the Council's principal representative.

The Council's Media Policy also acknowledges the role of the Lord Mayor as the principal spokesperson of the Council.

Public

As the Council's principal spokesperson, the Lord Mayor must ensure that statements made do not commit Council or Council resources to a particular course of action.

In dealing with the public, the Lord Mayor must:

- portray the Council in a positive light
- reflect Council's position
- avoid public criticism of individuals in a way that reflects on their competence or integrity
- avoid any admission of legal liability

The Lord Mayor may express personal opinions but these must be qualified as such.

Ex Officio Involvement with External Groups

The Lord Mayor may be asked to become involved with community groups, committees and organisations. Involvement may include being patron, a member of a committee, chairman of an organisation or an advocate for a particular cause.

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In accepting that this external community involvement is a legitimate function or role of the Lord Mayor, the Council does require that the Lord Mayor seek Council approval for involvement should it involve:

- travel, both intra and interstate and internationally
- the use of Council resources in excess of the normal support services available to the Lord Mayor
- a politically sensitive or controversial matter

In considering any requests for approval Council will consider:

- cost implications to Council
- community benefit from the Lord Mayor's involvement
- the extent of time needed to satisfy the involvement

Community Committees

Council may from time to time agree to support specific purpose community committees chaired by the Lord Mayor.

Council may be approached by another level of government to head up a community based specific purpose committee or working party with Lord Mayor as Chairman. Should Council agree to commit officer resources to facilitate the development of the committee, the Chief Executive Officer will delegate a responsible officer.

Functions

Subject to Council policy, the guest list for Civic Receptions and other official functions will be at the discretion of the Lord Mayor.

Communicating with Staff

All staff are answerable to the Chief Executive Officer, who is answerable to Council. The Lord Mayor's primary channel for communication with the administration is through the Chief Executive Officer.

At the Chief Executive Officer's discretion the Lord Mayor may deal directly with the General Managers and the Executive Manager.

Acting Lord Mayor

Where the Lord Mayor is likely to be travelling outside of the municipality for any activity for a period in excess of 24 hours, the Lord Mayor shall notify the Chief Executive Officer in reasonable time to enable appropriate arrangements for an Acting Lord Mayor.

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Lord Mayoral Alternate

Council will endeavour to provide an alternate member to represent the Lord Mayor at appropriate functions and meetings when the Lord Mayor is unable to attend.

In the event that neither the Lord Mayor nor the Deputy Lord Mayor is available to attend an official or social function, the order of appointing a representative will be:

- Acting Lord Mayor (if appointed)
- Chair of Committee relevant to occasion
- Any other available Aldermen

Lord Mayoral Correspondence & Records

Part of the Chief Executive Officer's responsibility under the Act is to maintain a register of correspondence and to ensure the correspondence is preserved and this further extends to the legislative requirements of the *Information Act*, insofar as correspondence is made available under Freedom of Information (FOI) provisions.

Correspondence to the Lord Mayor in the Lord Mayor's capacity as the 'Presiding Member' is a 'record of Council'. As such the correspondence and any response to it forms part of Council's records and property, including emails.

All correspondence addressed to the Lord Mayor (except those marked private or confidential) will be opened and recorded by the Records and Information Section of the City Performance Department.

All emails to the Lord Mayor about Council business will be recorded by the Lord Mayor's Executive Assistant.

Vehicle – Lord Mayor and Deputy/Acting Lord Mayor

Council will make available to the Lord Mayor an executive officer vehicle (including all fuel and running costs) for use throughout Australia, including for other than official duties and periods of absence on approved leave.

A private hire car will be made available to the Lord Mayor, the Deputy Lord Mayor or other Elected Member officiating for the Lord Mayor, for travel to and from official functions.

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Lord Mayor's Travel

Business class travel shall be available to the Lord Mayor when travelling on Council business. Council approval is required for international travel.

4 Definitions

Where the Act references the Principal Member or the Deputy Principal Member, this should be read as Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor accordingly.

5 Legislative References

Section 42 of the Act provides that the principal member of City of Darwin shall have the title of Lord Mayor. Section 43 of the Act specifically addresses the role of the Lord Mayor as principal member whilst Section 35 addresses the role of Elected Members generally.

6 Procedures / Related Documents

City of Darwin Policy No 014 - Code of Conduct - Elected Members
 City of Darwin Policy No 015 - Deputy Lord Mayor
 City of Darwin Policy No 017 - Elected Member Allowances

7 Responsibility / Application

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for managing implementation of this policy.

This policy should be reviewed once in the term of each Council or more often as required.

8 Document Control

Council Policy			Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer	
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1	20\2501	23/02/2010	Adopted	
2	20\4352	30/08/2011	Revision adopted	
3	21\3264	28/04/2015	Revision endorsed	
4	21\3361	26/05/2015	Revision adopted	26/05/2019
5	22\0455	27/02/2018	Revision adopted - Administrative amendments, update to internal processes around the 'Lord Mayoral Correspondence & Records' section to reflect internal practices that are undertaken by staff.	27/02/2022

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