

Becoming a City of Joondalup Elected Member



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CIVIC CHAMBERS

Introduction

In Western Australia, there are almost 1,300 Elected Members representing 137 local government authorities throughout the State and two Indian Ocean Territories. The differing cultural backgrounds, age groups, qualifications, occupations and life experiences of Elected Members are important in ensuring that decisions taken by local governments reflect the diverse views of their communities.

Nominating to become an Elected Member of the Joondalup Council is an important decision and the role can be often time consuming, demanding and complicated.

However becoming a City of Joondalup Elected Member can be a rewarding role and an opportunity to contribute to the community and influence decisions that affect the region.

As community leaders, Elected Members have a wide range of responsibilities including representing electors and residents, making decisions about community assets (such as playgrounds, parks, roads and large infrastructure) and making judgments about competing pressures and demands on resources of the City of Joondalup.

Elected Members represent the interests of their communities and have opportunities to:

- Make decisions that help people in the local community
- Influence the long-term vision and direction of the community
- Learn new skills, such as leadership, public speaking and advocacy
- Work with diverse and passionate people on a range of issues
- Balance the needs of the community
- Show leadership and advocate on behalf of the community.

This guide has been developed to assist people who may be interested in becoming an Elected Member, whether that is as a Councillor or the Mayor. This document highlights some important issues relevant to being an Elected Member; what is expected when performing in the role; and what benefits and support is available to assist people in their role of public office.

Local Government: Why it matters

Western Australian local governments

Local government in Western Australia is established under the *Local Government Act 1995* and has legislative responsibility for many functions and activities that are relevant to a local community. Local governments are well placed to understand the needs and priorities of its local residents.

As the level of government often seen as the 'closest' to the community, local government activities relate to matters that are fundamental to

people's lives and impact strongly on their quality of life. Local governments have the ability to take account of, and respond to, local views and ideas.

A local government consists of a Council – comprised of Elected Members, and an Administration – consisting of the CEO and employees. The City of Joondalup Council consists of 13 Elected Members (the Mayor and 12 Councillors) and the Administration consisting of approximately 1,000 employees.

A local government's responsibilities include:

- Representing people in the community, preparing strategic and financial plans, and making decisions about what sort of place the area will be in the future.
- Providing services and facilities for the well-being of people who live, work and do business in the area, striking a balance between social, environmental and economic priorities
- Consulting with communities and other spheres of government on local needs.



The City of Joondalup

The City delivers more than 150 services to its community including maintaining the beautiful parks, playgrounds, natural areas and coastline. It provides a varied program of cultural events and family-friendly fun activities, libraries, recreation centres, security patrols, waste collection and recycling, graffiti removal and child health immunisation clinics.

The City must be financially viable and sustainable to ensure it can continue to provide the services and programs its local community enjoys. The City's revenue is derived primarily from rates, fees and charges, although it also receives some funding through State and Commonwealth grant programs. As an Elected Member you will provide oversight on how the City funds its services and those that are offered.

The City pro-actively engages with its community and through its comprehensive public consultation and engagement program, obtains input from the community to inform the City's decisions about future plans for the area. As an Elected Member, you will receive feedback and opinion from members of the community and as such will need to balance their needs with the needs of the entire Joondalup community.

The City of Joondalup Council has adopted a *10 year Strategic Community Plan (Joondalup 2032)* as its overarching guide for the future that outlines and drives a new vision for Joondalup as it becomes a bold, creative and prosperous City on the global stage. With a strong emphasis on enhancing the liveability of Joondalup, improving transport and connectivity, celebrating and maintaining the region's natural assets, increasing local job opportunities and creating an engaged and inclusive community – Elected Members play the major role in achieving this vision.

It is an exciting time in the City's history. The City is innovative and continues to attract business investment, increase economic development opportunities and undertakes significant projects that will all play a vital role in ensuring Joondalup remains a liveable City that reaches its potential as the CBD for the North-West region of Perth.

As an Elected Member, you will be providing important input and direction on a range of projects that will see the City's vision become a reality.

What is required to become an Elected Member?

The Joondalup community is made up of a diverse range of people including people with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; people with a disability; families; and young people. It is accepted that people from diverse cultural backgrounds and age groups can bring a fresh outlook and new ideas to local government, which helps inform a more responsive approach to decision-making.

If you are passionate about your local community, then you are well-placed to become an Elected Member. There are no special qualifications to become an Elected Member other than a desire to serve your community. Training and support is provided to new and existing Elected Members to assist with becoming familiar with the new role.

The skills, knowledge and attributes which are helpful for Elected Members include:

- communication skills, including listening and interpersonal skills, public speaking, respecting different opinions, negotiation, mediation and conflict resolution skills.
- Problem solving and analytical skills, in order to get to the core of a problem and come up with good solutions.
- Teamwork skills as elected members and the City's administration need to work together for the benefit of the community.

- Organisational skills, including time management and priority setting.
- Understanding financial and reporting processes including budgets and financial reports.
- Ability to engage with the community.
- Understanding the principles of natural justice.
- Understanding the role and services of local government.
- Ability to understand legislation.
- Leadership qualities such as energy, optimism, motivation, resilience, confidence, assertiveness, strategic thinking, advocacy and networking.
- Ethical and accountable behaviour – and a commitment to acting in the best interests of the community as a whole.

At the end of this guide, a checklist has been prepared to assist you in making the decision about whether becoming an Elected Member is for you.



What are Elected Members required to do?

The formal role of an Elected Member is detailed in the *Local Government Act 1995* and includes:

- Representing the interests of electors, ratepayers and residents of the entire district, not just those that elect them.
- Providing leadership and guidance to the community in the district.
- Facilitating communication between the community and the council.
- Participating in the local government's decision-making processes at Council and Committee meetings.
- Performing such other functions as are given to an Elected Member by the *Local Government Act 1995* or any other written law.

The Mayor is required to perform all of the above as well as:

- Preside at council meetings.
- Provide leadership and guidance to the community in the district.
- Carry out civic and ceremonial duties on behalf of the City.
- Speak on behalf of the City.
- Liaise with the ceo on the City's affairs and the performance of its functions.
- Perform such other functions as are given to the Mayor by the *Local Government Act 1995* or any other written law.

Once successfully elected, your role as an Elected Member will involve:

- Attending and participating in Council meetings, that are run using formal meeting rules and procedures.
- Reading and understanding reports, including financial, environmental and social issues reports.
- Presenting your arguments and debating with other Elected Members.
- Keeping in touch with people in your area and speaking at community events.

As an Elected Member, you will be contributing your thoughts and ideas within a decision-making body that:

- Decides on strategic and development plans for the local area.
- Ensures City resources are used fairly for the benefit of all in the community.
- Talks to local people about their views and ideas for the area.
- Lets others know on Council, regionally and in State and Commonwealth Government agencies, about the local community issues.

Attending meetings and events

One of the major commitments of an Elected Member is their time to attend various meetings, functions and events. This may mean having to put aside other family or personal commitments and responsibilities from time to time.

The City of Joondalup operates on a four weekly meeting cycle, in which meetings are generally held on the first, second and fourth Tuesdays of the month (other than the second half of December and all of January when the Council is in recess). There are other meetings that are held from time to time such as Committee meetings, working group meetings and workshops you may be required to attend on other days during the month.

As an Elected Member there is also an opportunity for you to become a member, or the City's representative, on boards and committees of various external agencies, government bodies or groups. This will also increase the time commitment required of you.

The City, as part of its annual civic calendar of events, conducts numerous receptions, dinners and lunches for community groups, volunteers and the City's stakeholders, as well as regular citizenship ceremonies to swear in Australia's newest citizens. As an Elected Member you will be invited to attend these events and you may even be required to participate in making speeches or presentations.

While meetings and events add to the time commitment needed to be an Elected Member, they provide a valuable opportunity for Elected Members to engage with members of the community as well as networking with key stakeholders, business leaders and important dignitaries.

Ethical standards of behaviour

Elected Members are holders of public office, exercising powers, functions and duties on behalf of the City's community and the public at large.

Elected Members are required to put public interest before self-interest and to respect and uphold the principles and laws designed to protect the public interest and to preserve the public trust and confidence in the integrity of government.

The *Local Government Act 1995* requires that every local government prepare or adopt a Code of Conduct which sets out the standards of behaviour expected to be observed by Elected Members, committee members and local government election candidates, as well as employees. The City's Codes of Conduct are not intended to control or prohibit the actions of any of these parties, but simply to document the standards of conduct expected of all who serve the community.



The community is entitled to expect that the following general principles be used to guide Elected Members in their behaviours:

- Act with reasonable care and diligence.
- Act with honesty and integrity.
- Act lawfully.
- Avoid damage to the reputation of the City.
- Be open and accountable to the public.
- Base decisions on relevant and factually correct information.
- Treat others with respect and fairness.
- Not be impaired by mind affecting substances.

The *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021 (Rules of Conduct)* also provides a framework to deal with individual conduct by Elected Members.

The Rules of Conduct prescribe uniform rules of conduct for Elected Members in relation to:

- Standards of general behaviour.
- Use of confidential information.
- Securing personal advantage or advantaging/disadvantaging others.
- Misuse of local government resources.
- Prohibition against involvement with the Administration.
- Relations with employees.
- Disclosing interests that may affect impartiality.
- Receipt and disclosure of gifts of a prescribed value.

As an Elected Member, a person becomes a key public official throughout the community and their behaviour and actions will be seen, and reflected on, by others. Elected Members must therefore reflect high standards of ethics and personal behaviour.



What support is available for an Elected Member?

Becoming an Elected Member is an important commitment to the local community. Elected Members are not entitled to wages, workers compensation or sick pay but there are benefits available and support and assistance in place.

The range of benefits available for Elected Members is provided in legislation or through the City's *Elected Members' Entitlements Policy*. A summary of these benefits is detailed below:

On-going training and development

One of the personal benefits of becoming an Elected Member is the opportunity to undertake structured professional development. All Elected Members are encouraged to participate in on-going professional development during their term of office.

On becoming an Elected Member, the City provides a comprehensive induction program.

During the course of their term, the City also provides a financial allocation for Elected Members to attend intrastate, interstate and overseas conferences offered by major professions in local government and other institutions of relevance to local government activities. The Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) also offers numerous training and development opportunities for Elected Members to perform their role more effectively.

Meeting fees

Under the *Local Government Act 1995* Elected Members are entitled to receive an annual meeting fee, set by the State of Western Australia's Salaries and Allowances Tribunal, for attending meetings of Council and its committees.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor receive an additional annual allowance above the annual meeting fee, again set by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal. The Mayor is also able to use a City supplied vehicle to attend City related events and activities.

The fees paid to Elected Members are subject to tax, and may affect assessable income for tax purposes.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Allowance

It is important for an Elected Member to 'stay connected' with the community and this is often achieved through telephone contact or email.

The *Local Government Act 1995* provides that an annual allowance for telecommunication and information technology expenses can be paid to Elected Members. These allowances generally cover the costs for mobile phone calls, phone plans, internet connection or other similar expenses.

The annual ICT allowance for these purposes is set annually by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal.



Child care expenses

Child care costs will be paid for an Elected Member to attend meetings, receptions, citizenship ceremonies, functions and other City-related activities. Child care costs are applicable for children, either of natural birth or guardianship determined by a legal process. However child care costs are not paid for where the care is provided by a member of the immediate family or relative living in the same premises as the Elected Member.

The hourly rate for child care costs is determined annually by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal.

City-issued equipment

It is important that Elected Members have necessary equipment to enable them to perform their role.

The City provides the following computer equipment to Elected Members for the term of their incumbency:

- Notebook or desktop computer.
- Apple iPhone.
- Apple iPad.
- All-in-one printer.
- Time Capsule or Airport Express for internet connection and use.

Appropriate stationery, name badges, business cards, letterhead and a Civic Centre access card are also provided, as well as items of City of Joondalup corporate business wear.



Reimbursement of related expenses

The *Local Government Act 1995* allows the City to reimburse any expense an Elected Member incurs while performing their role as an Elected Member. The City allocates each Elected Member an amount that can be used to claim reimbursement of such expenses.

Travel expenses and parking

As an Elected Member you will be required to attend meetings and other City-related events from time to time. The travel and parking expenses incurred by an Elected Member will be reimbursed by the City when they use their private vehicle or bicycle to and from meetings and other events when performing their role as an Elected Member. The amount is unlimited and payment is calculated using the rate per kilometre that is prescribed for the class of vehicle.

Secure car parking is available for Elected Members at the City's Administration Centre and Civic Building.

Office furniture and equipment expenses

Once becoming an Elected Member, you may require a room or space in your home being set up as an office to enable you to perform your responsibilities. On successful election to Council, the City provides an amount for office furniture and equipment expenses. This includes costs incurred for the purchase of desks, chairs, filing cabinets or other office equipment and furniture that may be required.



How do I nominate?

The Western Australian Electoral Commission administers City of Joondalup Local Government Elections and provides information to prospective candidates on how to nominate to become an Elected Member. To become an Elected Member you must firstly submit an appropriate and correctly completed nomination form and the nomination fee to the Returning Officer of the City's Local Government Elections, once the nomination period for prospective candidates opens (usually 44 days before the date of the Local Government Elections).

To nominate to become an Elected Member (whether that be the Mayor or Councillor) you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older.
- not be disqualified from being an Elected Member under a provision of the Act.
- Be an elector of the district (if you are only an elector because you are a nominee of a company then you are not eligible to stand as a candidate).
- (If you are a current council member) have a term that ends on Election Day, unless you are standing for Mayor at large.

You are not eligible to nominate to become an Elected Member if you:

- Are a member of State or Federal Parliament.
- Are an insolvent under administration.
- A serving a prison sentence for a crime.
- Have been convicted of a serious local government offence within the last five years, (unless the court waived the disqualification).
- Are a member of another Council.
- Are subject to a court order disqualifying you from being an Elected Member because you have misapplied local government funds or property.
- Are the nominee of a company
- Propose standing for two positions on Council (unless you are standing for Mayor as well as Councillor).
- Are currently disqualified by the State Administrative Tribunal from holding office as a member of a Council.



Where can I go to get more information?

A good start to becoming more informed is to attend a City of Joondalup Council meeting and speak to sitting Elected Members or retired Elected Members.

The City also provides information on the election timetable and the nomination process, and runs candidate information sessions closer

to the time the Local Government Elections occur. The details and location of the sessions are publicised on the City's website closer to the time.

The organisations below also provide a range of publications and documents that may be of assistance in your decision to become an Elected Member.

City of Joondalup joondalup.wa.gov.au

- Governance Framework
- Elected Members' Entitlements Policy
- Code of Conduct

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries dlgsc.wa.gov.au

- *Standing for Council: Information for candidates.*
- *Standing for Council PowerPoint and DVD*
- *Frequently asked questions about your local government elections*

Western Australian Electoral Commission waec.wa.gov.au

- *A Guide for Candidates: Local Government Postal Elections.*

Department of Justice legislation.wa.gov.au

Local Government Act 1995
Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021

Further information can also be obtained by contacting the City of Joondalup on **9400 4000**.



Checklist: Becoming an Elected Member

✓	I am prepared to...
<input type="checkbox"/>	Promote a positive image and profile of Council and the City.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inform myself about community needs and concerns and advocate at Council meetings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Present a broad view of electors not just a sectional/ward view.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Network with clubs, community, business and service groups to seek feedback when needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate effectively in strategic planning and policy development.

✓	I have skills to...
<input type="checkbox"/>	Engage with all members of the community in a non-discriminatory way.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Read and understand agendas and reports so i can prepare for meetings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use computers to download, print, save and edit documents, use email and access internet sites.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Communicate effectively, negotiate, explain and discuss issues.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Research and evaluate community issues and concerns.

✓	I understand...
<input type="checkbox"/>	The demographic profile of the City's area and relevant issues.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The social, environmental and economic issues facing my community in the short and long term.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The statutory responsibilities I will have to observe.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Elected members have no individual authority to act or make decisions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decisions cannot be made at informal gatherings, only at formal Council meetings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	There are conflict of interest provisions and codes of conduct to observe.
<input type="checkbox"/>	It is expected that elected members will conduct themselves with integrity, honesty and fairness and treat people with respect at all times.
<input type="checkbox"/>	How to read and interpret budgets and other financial statements or am prepared to seek additional information or training if required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rates are a key income source for the City and I understand the City's rating system.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The role of local government and its relationship with State and Commonwealth Government.



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This document is available in alternate formats upon request.

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