



A GUIDE FOR COUNCILLORS-ELECT 2025





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement of Country	4
Welcome and Purpose	5
The Role of a Councillor.....	6
Leadership Roles	8
Time Commitment and Expectations	10
Conduct and Integrity.....	11
Training and Support.....	12
What Happens After the Election.....	13
Ready to Represent Your Community?	14

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Shire of Chittering wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the and within the Shire of Chittering, the Yued and Whadjuk people. We would like to pay respect to the Elders of the Nyoongar nation, past and present, who have walked and cared for the land. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture, and the contribution made to this region.

WELCOME AND PURPOSE

Serving as an Elected Member is both an honour and a serious responsibility. This guide has been prepared to help you understand what to expect if you are elected to the Shire of Chittering Council, from the time commitment and training requirements to your role in decision-making and community leadership.

Local Government is the level of government closest to the community. It delivers the services, infrastructure, and local leadership that directly impact residents' daily lives.

There are 137 local governments in Western Australia, each governed by the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act). The Shire of Chittering is one of them, a rural district of approximately 6,750 residents across 1,200km² including Muchea, Chittering, Bindoon, Mooliabeenee and Wannamal.

Understanding where local government fits in Australia's democratic system helps Elected Members appreciate how their decisions influence everyday life.

THE THREE TIERS OF GOVERNMENT

TIER	FOCUS	TYPICAL RESPONSIBILITIES
Commonwealth	National Policies	Defence, immigration, taxation, welfare and foreign affairs
State	Policy and legislation	Health, education, transport, policing and state roads
Local	Community service delivery	Waste, local roads, parks & facilities, community development and local laws

WHAT COUNCIL DOES

Council is the Shire's governing body, responsible for:

- Setting the community's vision and long-term direction.
- Making policy decisions and adopting local laws.
- Approving budgets and allocating resources.
- Representing community interests to other levels of government.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and staff manage daily operations, implement Council's decisions, and ensure compliance with legislation and policy.

While Council sets the strategic direction, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and staff are responsible for implementing those decisions and managing daily operations in accordance with the Act.

THE ROLE OF A COUNCILLOR

Elected Members are community representatives who make strategic and policy decisions for the good governance of the Shire. They balance community needs, legislative requirements, and long-term sustainability in every decision.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

Under s2.10 of the *Act*, Elected Members play a critical role in the governance of their district. Their key responsibilities include:

- Represent the interests of electors, ratepayers and residents.
- Provide leadership and guidance to the community.
- Participate in decision-making at Council meetings.
- Facilitate communication between Council and the community.
- Perform other duties assigned by Council or the *Act*.

EQUALITY OF ROLES AND VOTING

All Councillors, including the Shire President and Deputy Shire President, share the same decision-making authority and voting rights. Each Councillor has one vote on every matter before Council. The Shire President does not hold additional voting power, except in the case of a tied vote (for example, a 3 / 3 result), where one councillor is not attending a meeting, and there is a split vote between the six councillors in the meeting, they may exercise a casting vote in accordance with the *Act*.

The distinction between the roles lies primarily in additional leadership and civic duties, not in their voting power or overall responsibility.

- The Shire President presides over Council meetings, represents the Shire at official and regional events, and works closely with the CEO on matters of governance and advocacy.
- The Deputy Shire President supports the President and presides in their absence.
- All other Councillors share the same obligations to attend meetings, read and consider reports, participate in debate, and represent the community with integrity.

In essence, every Councillor has equal influence in Council decisions, and the effectiveness of Council depends on collective discussion, respect for process, and informed decision-making.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD ELECTED MEMBER

- Act with integrity and fairness.
- Listens to all perspectives and makes balanced decisions.
- Works collaboratively and respectfully with others.
- Focuses on governance and strategy rather than day-to-day operational matters.
- Reads, prepares, and participates constructively in meetings.
- Respects confidentiality and upholds the Code of Conduct.

WHAT ELECTED MEMBERS DON'T DO

- Manage staff
- Direct day-to-day operations
- Make individual promises outside formal Council decisions

Lead Strategically

Listen Actively

Decide Collectively

LEADERSHIP ROLES

Council operates as a collective leadership body. Each position contributes to strong governance and community representation.

ROLE	PRIMARY PURPOSE	TYPICAL MONTHLY COMMITMENT
Councillor	Represents the community, contributes to policy and strategic decisions	10 – 14 hours minimum
Deputy President	Supports the President, presides in their absence, assists in leadership and representation roles including attendance at AROC and WALGA Zone meetings	12 – 16 hours minimum
Shire President	Provides civic leadership, chairs Council meetings, leads strategic engagement with the community, and represents the Shire at official functions and intergovernmental forums. Responsibilities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular meetings with the Deputy President and CEO• Representation on AROC and WALGA Zone meetings (travel required)• Attendance at citizenship ceremonies and other major civic events.• Attendance and officiating at citizenship ceremonies and other major civic events.	16 – 20 hours minimum

Each role has distinct responsibilities, but all share a common goal, to serve the community with integrity and purpose.

EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION AND CIVIC DUTIES

In addition to their leadership responsibilities within Council, the Shire President and Deputy Shire President are also required to represent the Shire at key regional and civic functions throughout the year. These commitments are an important part of the Shire's external engagement and intergovernmental collaboration.

WALGA Avon-Midland Zone

The WALGA Zone meets quarterly and rotates between member local governments across the region. Attendance requires travel to various towns within the Zone area. Attendance by the President and Deputy President requires travel to various towns within the Zone area.

These meetings provide an opportunity to collaborate with neighbouring local governments, discuss regional priorities, and provide input into WALGA's State Council.

Avon Regional Organisation of Councils (AROC)

AROC also meets quarterly, with meetings typically held in Toodyay.

This forum focuses on shared regional projects and advocacy on behalf of the Avon region local governments. Attendance by the President and Deputy President ensures Chittering's interests are represented in regional planning and collaboration.

Citizenship Ceremonies

Citizenship ceremonies are usually held quarterly, although additional ceremonies may be arranged depending on the number of conferees awaiting citizenship.

The Shire President presides over each ceremony and delivers the official address, with support from the Deputy President where required. Attendance at these events is an important civic duty and a valued opportunity to welcome new Australian citizens into the Chittering community.

TEAMWORK AND RESPECT

The Council, President, and CEO work collaboratively. Council sets strategic direction; the CEO implements it. Effective Councils value open communication, professional debate, and evidence-based decision-making.

MEETINGS AND DECISION-MAKING

- Council makes formal decisions at Ordinary Council Meetings, usually held monthly.
- Elected Members also attend Agenda Forums, Information Sessions, Committees, and community events.
- All decisions are made collectively by vote and must comply with the Act and Shire policies.
- Meetings are open to the public (except confidential items) and recorded in minutes published on the Shire website.

Elected Members must come prepared, engage constructively, and ensure decisions reflect both legislative requirements and community expectations

GOOD DECISION-MAKING IS

Lawful

Transparent

Evidence-based

Informed

TIME COMMITMENT AND EXPECTATIONS

Serving as a Councillor requires consistent commitment to meetings, preparation, and community engagement.

CURRENT MONTHLY MEETING CYCLE

WEEK	ACTIVITY	TYPICAL DURATION
2nd Wednesday	Information Session & Agenda Forum	4 – 5 hours minimum
3rd Wednesday	Information Session & Ordinary Council Meeting	4 – 5 hours minimum
Ad hoc	Committees, community events, or workshops	1 – 3 hours minimum

- **Preparation:** allow around 2 hours per meeting to read reports and prepare questions.
- **Community Engagement:** attendance at major civic events such as Australia Day, ANZAC Day, Taste of Chittering, Citizenship Ceremonies.
- **Budget Workshops:** held between May and June each year (4 – 5 sessions).

Balancing work, family and civic duties is essential. A leave of absence can be granted where needed under s2.25 of the Act.

CONDUCT AND INTEGRITY

Elected Members are expected to uphold the highest standards of ethical behaviour and decision-making.

CODE OF CONDUCT

All Elected Members must follow the *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Regulations 2021* and the Shire's Behaviour Complaints Policy.

Key expectations include:

- Acting honestly, respectfully, and without bias.
- Declaring conflicts of interest early*.
- Protecting confidential information.
- Using social media responsibly.

**Conflicts of interest can be financial, proximity, or impartiality interests. Elected Members must disclose these prior to discussion or voting.*

Integrity: Act honestly and in the public interest

Respect: Treat others courteously and avoid conflicts

Accountability: Be transparent, declare interests, and follow due process

Breaches of the Code may result in a behavioural complaint managed under the Shire's Behaviour Complaints Policy and *the Model Code of Conduct Regulations 2021*.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Council decisions are made publicly and recorded in minutes.
- Registers of gifts, interests, and training are published on the Shire website.
- The Shire's Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee oversees governance and compliance.

By maintaining integrity and transparency, Elected Members strengthen community trust and confidence in local government.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Once elected, every Elected Member must complete WALGA's Council Member Essentials training within 12 months (s5.126 of the *Act*). Training ensures all Elected Members are equipped to perform their role confidently and in accordance with the law.

MANDATORY MODULES

- Understanding Local Government
- Serving on Council
- Meeting Procedures and Debate
- Conflicts of Interest
- Understanding Financial Reports and Budgets

ONGOING SUPPORT

The Shire provides

- **Equipment and Access:** Laptop, official email, and Elected Member Portal access.
- **Governance Support:** Meeting coordination, agenda assistance, and guidance from the CEO and Governance Team.
- **Professional Development:** Opportunities through WALGA and LG Professionals WA.

The Shire's Governance Team will assist Elected Members to complete mandatory training, maintain records, and identify further development opportunities.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE ELECTION

Once election results are declared, the journey from candidate to Elected Member begins:

1. Swearing-In Ceremony: You will take the official oath or affirmation.
2. Induction Program: Governance and WALGA training to build knowledge and confidence.
3. Committee Appointments: You will be nominated to serve on advisory committees or external organisations.
4. First Council Meeting: Participation in decision-making begins immediately.
5. Ongoing Learning: Training, mentoring, and professional development continue throughout your term.

Once the election results are declared, the journey from candidate to Elected Member begins. The Shire will provide an induction and ongoing support to help you succeed in your new role. You will have access to officers, mentors, and training resources to help you navigate your responsibilities confidently. New Elected Members are also encouraged to attend local events and connect with residents to understand community priorities.

READY TO REPRESENT YOUR COMMUNITY?

Becoming an Elected Member is both rewarding and challenging. It requires commitment, teamwork, and a passion for serving your community.

Please ensure that you have:

- Time for meetings, reading and community events.
- Willingness to work collaboratively and respect different views.
- Upholding confidentiality, integrity and fairness at all times.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Local Government Resources

- [*Local Government Act 1995 \(WA\)*](#)
- [*Local Government \(Model Code of Conduct\) Regulations 2021*](#)
- [DLGSC: Stand for Council](#)
- [WALGA: Candidate Details](#)
- Shire of Chittering website: [Home » Shire of Chittering](#)
- Contact the Shire's Governance Team: (08) 9576 4600 or chatter@chittering.wa.gov.au

