

TITLE:	Presidential Protocol Policy		
DIVISION:	Corporate		
ADOPTED BY:	Barkly Regional Council		
DATE OF ADOPTION:	14 September 2017	DATE OF REVIEW:	September 2021
MOTION NUMBER:	OC 152/17		
POLICY NUMBER:	CP000024		
AUTHORISED:	Barkly Regional Council		

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:

Barkly Regional Council President and Elected Members.

SUMMARY

The aim of all policy is for Councillors to provide strategic input into the effective operational framework of the organisation under S.11 of the Local Government Act

This policy provides a framework for the Office of the President in relation to protocols associated with that Office and Council's administrative arrangements. The Policy addresses the following topics:

- Committing the Council or its resources
- Relations with the media and public
- Ex Officio involvement with community groups
- Functions
- Communicating with staff
- Acting President

The Policy also addresses the following administrative processes:

- Presidential correspondence
- President's vehicle
- Partner's travel expenses

OBJECTIVES

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

BACKGROUND

Both the President and the CEO have defined responsibilities under the *Local Government Act*. Whilst the President is the head of the Council the CEO is in charge of the Council's administrative arm and is responsible to the Council as a whole rather than to the President. To avoid conflict it is important for the Council to set out clear rules or protocols governing this important relationship.

POLICY

The role of the President or Principal Member is defined in Section 43 of the *Local Government Act*. This Policy is designed to provide a framework for the operational aspects associated with the Office of President and its interaction with Council's administration.

Committing the Council or Council Resources

In accordance with the *Local Government Act*, an elected member, including the President, 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 President has the right to 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

The *Local Government Act 2008* specifies that one of the roles of the President is to speak on behalf of the Council as the Council's principal representative. As the Council's principal spokesperson, the President must ensure that statements made do not commit Council or Council resources to a particular course of action. In dealing with the public, the President must:

- Portray the Council in a positive light;
- Reflect Council's position;
- Avoid public criticism of individuals in a way that reflects on a person's competence or integrity; and
- Avoid any admission of legal liability

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

Ex Officio Involvement with External Groups

The President 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.

The Council acknowledges that this external community involvement is a legitimate function of the President however the Council requires that the President seek Council approval should the role involve international travel, the use of Council resources (including staff time) where the role involves resources not normally allocated to the President in excess of the normal support services available to the President or a politically sensitive or controversial matter.

In considering any requests for approval Council will consider the cost implications for the Council, community benefit from the President's involvement and the extent of time needed to satisfy the involvement

Functions

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

The President will determine whether to provide an alternate member to represent the President at functions and meetings arranged by other parties when the President is unable to attend.

Communicating with Staff

All staff are answerable to the CEO who is responsible to the Council. The President's primary channel for communication with the administration will be through the CEO.

At the Chief Executive Officer's discretion the President may deal directly with the Directors.

Acting President

Where the President will be absent from the Council area for a period in excess of 24 hours, the President shall notify the Deputy President and the CEO.

Presidential Correspondence & Records

Part of the CEO's responsibility under the *Local Government Act* is to maintain a register of correspondence and to ensure the correspondence is preserved. Other legislation requires the preservation of correspondence and its availability for Information purposes.

Correspondence to the President in the President's capacity as the 'Presiding Member' is a 'record of Council'. As such the correspondence and any response to it are part of Council's records and form part of its property. All letters addressed to the President (except those marked private or confidential) will be opened and recorded by the administration. All external emails to the President about Council business will be recorded by the President's Executive Assistant. If the President's Executive Assistant does not have direct access to the President's emails then the President will forward those emails requiring registration.

Vehicle – President and Deputy/Alternate

Council will make available to the President a vehicle. Council extends to the President usage of the vehicle (including all fuel and running costs) Australia wide for official duties, including reasonable personal use. Fuel and running cost for use outside of the Northern Territory are at the Presidents expense.

Partner's Travel and Personal Running Costs

The Council acknowledges that there are occasions when it is appropriate for the President's partner to accompany him or her on official Council business. Any additional expenses for partner travel are required to be covered by the President.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risks that arise should an inadequate Presidential Protocol Policy exist, the recommended actions should be followed, mitigation strategy developed and included in the BRC Risk Register.

REFERENCES

Code of Conduct - Members

LEGISLATION & STANDARDS

Local Government Act Section 11, 43 and 35

LINKS

<https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/LOCAL-GOVERNMENT-ACT>

RESPONSIBILITY & DELEGATION

President / Deputy President

CEO / CEO's Delegate. The CEO is responsible for briefing newly elected President and any Member acting as President on the requirements of this Policy.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Any issues in relation to the operation or interpretation of this Policy are to be drawn to the Council's attention by the CEO after each general election.

Review each "Term of Council". Review date August 2022 or earlier if required.