

POLICY

TITLE:	PRINCIPLE MEMBER PROTOCOL		
DIVISION:	COUNCIL		
ADOPTED BY:	COUNCIL		
DATE OF ADOPTION:	JANUARY 2022	DATE OF REVIEW:	SEPTEMBER 2025
MOTION NUMBER:	OC 10/22		
POLICY NUMBER:	CP24		
LEGISLATIVE REF:	Regulation 6(d)(iv) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021		

PURPOSE:

To establish protocols and provide a framework for the Office of the Principle member in relation to protocols associated with that Office and Council's administrative arrangements.

1. DEFINITIONS

Under the Local Government Act (2019)

Principle member refers to the Mayor or President of the council.

2. PRINCIPLES

Both the Principle member and the CEO have defined responsibilities under the Local Government Act. Whilst the Principle member is the head of the Council, the CEO is in charge of the Council's administrative and operational arm, and is responsible to the Council. To avoid conflict it is important for the Council to set out clear rules or protocols governing this important relationship.

3. POLICY

The role of the Principal Member is defined in Section 59 of the Local Government Act. This Policy is designed to provide a framework for the operational aspects associated with the Office of Principle member and its interaction with Council's administration.

3.1 Committing the Council or Council Resources

In accordance with the Local Government Act, an elected member, including the Principle 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 Principle member 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.

3.2 Relations with the Media (including social media) and the Public

One of the roles of the Principle member is to speak on behalf of the Council as the Council's principal representative. As the Council's principal spokesperson, the Principle member must ensure that statements made do not commit Council or Council resources to a particular course of action.

In dealing with the public, the Principle member 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 Principle member may express personal opinions but these must be qualified as such.

3.3 Ex Officio Involvement with External Groups

The Principle member 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 Principle member, however the Council requires that the Principle member seek Council approval should the role involve:

- Interstate or international travel,
- the use of Council resources (including staff time),
- resources not normally allocated to the Principle member or
- resources in excess of the normal support services available to the Principle member 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 Principle member's involvement and the extent of time needed to satisfy the involvement

3.4 Functions

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

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

3.5 Communicating with Staff

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

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

3.6 Acting Principle member

The deputy principal member is to carry out any of the principal member's functions when the principal member is absent from official duties for a period in excess of 24 hours.

The principle member must notify the CEO of their absence, and the delegation of duties to the acting principle member, in order for the CEO to commence all administrative procedures relating to the acting principle member.

3.7 Principle member 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 Principle member in the Principle member'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 Principle member (except those marked private or confidential) will be opened and recorded by the administration.
- All external emails to the Principle member about Council business will be recorded by the Principle member's Executive Assistant. If the Principle member's Executive Assistant does not have direct access to the Principle member's emails then the Principle member will forward those emails requiring registration.

3.8 Vehicle – Principle member and Deputy/Alternate

Council will make available to the Principle member a vehicle.

Council extends to the Principle member usage of the vehicle (including all fuel and running costs) Australia wide for official duties.

The principal member may use the car for personal use in the Northern Territory.

Council extends the Principal member usage of the vehicle for interstate travel, with the principal member to pay for fuel.

The council must approve all trips outside the Barkly Region.

The Acting principle member will not be issued with a car as a benefit, but a car will be made available for official council business.

3.9 Partner's Travel and Personal Running Costs

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

4. RELEVANT LEGISLATION, STANDARDS AND FORMS

Local Government Act (2019)

Barkly Regional Council Acting Principle Member remuneration form

5. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Within six (6) months of a new term of Council.