

# Governance Essentials for Local Government

21/22 V1

## PRODUCT BRIEF

LEARNING LEVEL	DELIVERY METHOD	DURATION	DPD UNITS
Starting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>in-house only</li><li>face-to-face</li></ul>	2 days	20

Governance Essentials for Local Government is designed for Councillors, Mayors and executive management, and provides a basic overview of their duties and responsibilities. It consists of four sessions—***The Role of the Council and Councillor***, ***Leadership: The Councillors Role***, ***Introduction to Financial Statements for Councillors*** and ***Strategy and Risk: Issues for Councillors***.

Each session may be undertaken in conjunction with other sessions in the **Governance Essentials for Local Government** course or as a stand-alone education offering.

### Value proposition

Designed for Councillors, Mayors and executive management, *Governance Essentials for Local Government* provides a basic overview of their duties and responsibilities through interactive working sessions and the use of relevant case studies.

### Suitable for

Councillors, Mayors and executives who hold positions within Local Government organisations, and seek to learn more about:

- The duties and responsibilities of Councils and Councillors.
- Their governance responsibilities.

### Learning objectives

Upon completion of the program, you will be able to:

- Identify the duties and responsibilities of a Councillor

- Examine leadership in action within a Council context
- Outline the Councillors' roles with regard to financial statements and financial reports
- Recognise the link between corporate strategy and financial performance
- Identify the Councillor's role in formulating and monitoring strategy, and identifying and assessing risk

## Course delivery method

The **Governance Essentials for Local Government** course is an in-house only, face-to-face course.

This course has a length of 2 days, conducted over four sessions. Layout is generally cabaret, to enable small group work and table discussion. Input is provided by a facilitator and PowerPoint slides, with short activities and case studies included to guide discussion. Group size is customarily limited to a maximum of 25 people.

Our facilitators are experienced company directors. They are selected based on their knowledge of the board environment as well as their ability to engage and connect with participants.

## Content outline

### ***The Role of the Council and Councillor***

This session provides an overview of how the Council uses systems and processes to control and monitor—or govern—Council activities. These are distinct from management's role, which is to ensure that the day-to-day operations of the Council are carried out within the framework of policies and strategic guidelines the Councillors have established. Participants also explore the duties and responsibilities of a Councillor; and the Council's key governance relationships, including those with Local, State and Federal levels of Government, Local Government staff, the local community and special interest groups.

### **Learning objectives**

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify the role and key functions of the Council.
- Explain the purpose and essential features of good governance within local government organisations.
- Outline the key duties and responsibilities of Councillors and explain the associated liabilities and their related protection.
- Know the rights of Councillors.
- Recognise the consequences of breaching Councillors' duties.
- Identify the regulatory frameworks and the roles of various regulators.
- Know the role of the state government and state minister responsible for the local government portfolio.

### ***Leadership: The Councillor's Role***

This session assists Councillors to increase their understanding of their own leadership style, others' styles and how leadership is used to build an effective, high-performing Council. It examines the leadership

roles of primary Council representatives and illustrates how good leadership contributes to the solving and preventing of problems, the building of trust, and the enrichment of the local community.

### **Learning objectives**

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand essential competencies of effective leadership.
- Examine leadership in action within a Council context.
- Identify the differences in leadership for elected Councillors and executive managers.
- Know how to use leadership competencies to strengthen decision making and Council performance.
- Evaluate oneself as a leader.
- Create an individual leadership development plan.

### ***Introduction to Financial Statements for Councillors***

This session introduces Councillors to financial concepts, the key financial statements, the duties imposed on them, and how to establish a basic understanding of assessing financial performance. Participants learn common ratios used by boards to monitor performance; and consider issues to be mindful of when questioning management on the preparation of financial statements and when reviewing financial reports.

### **Learning objectives**

At the end of this session participants will be able to:

- Examine the major elements of financial statements.
- Appreciate the relationship between financial statements.
- Explore the areas where Councillors need to question financial statements.
- Identify Councillors' roles with regard to financial statements and financial reports.
- Review performance over time through using each of the three main financial statements.
- Identify the financial ratios that can be used to monitor Council performance and consider those that are required to be included the annual financial statements.
- Consider the questions to ask of management when reviewing the monthly and long-term financial reporting.

## Strategy and Risk: Issues for Councillors

This session is designed as an introduction to the Councillor's role in relation to strategy and risk, and seeks to provide the basic tools to enable Councillors to take a more confident and active role in their strategic and risk governance roles, for the benefit of both the organisation and themselves.

### Learning objectives

At the end of the session participants will be able to:

- Explain the Councillor's and Council's role in risk and strategy
- Identify a Councillor's personal risk appetite, and recognise how this relates to the risks they are exposed to in their role.
- Recognise the relationship between strategy, risk management, risk culture and effective leadership.
- Appreciate the importance of strategy and strategic thinking for Councillors and Council when achieving outcomes for their community.
- Explain the Councillor's and Council's role in the development of the general integrated planning and reporting framework for local government.
- Evaluate a Councillor's and Council's strategic thinking skills.

### Assessment process

Not applicable.

### What do participants achieve upon completion?

Participants gain 5 DPD units for confirmed attendance of each session or 20 DPD units for the full two days. Statements of Attendance are available upon request from the managing Australian Institute of Company Directors state office.