



South Gippsland Shire Council

COUNCILLOR SELF-ASSESSMENT POLICY (C84)

Policy Number C84
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 Meeting Item No. 4.5
 Next Review Date May 2025

Directorate
 Department
 Primary Author

Chief Executive Office
 Governance
 Coordinator Council Business

GOOD GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK – Councillor Self-Assessment Policy

Overarching Principle

The Councillor Self-Assessment Policy supports the Mayor and Councillors to reflect on, and build, their effectiveness and capability to work together as a cohesive team to deliver the best outcomes for the community they are elected to serve.

The Policy provides structure to the Good Governance Framework 'Capability' pillar by providing a continuous improvement mechanism to implement opportunities for enhancements. The Policy also supports the 'Culture and Behaviour' pillar through self-assessment tools that require reflection on the culture of the Councillors as a group and individually.

1. PURPOSE

The power that underpins this *Councillor Self-Assessment Policy* (Policy) is derived from *Part 2 - Councils* of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Act), which defines the roles and responsibilities for Mayors and Councillors and requires they be inducted and supported to adequately to fulfil their civic duties. This Policy provides the means for Councillors to enhance their individual and collective skills and performance through a continuous improvement process.

Members of the South Gippsland community who are elected to serve the community as Councillors do so in an effort to deliver great outcomes for the community. This Policy aims to support Councillors to work together effectively to deliver community outcomes.

The purpose of this Policy is to establish the principles and requirement for the Mayor and Councillors to participate in a constructive annual self-assessment, in order to:

- 1.1 Build a culture of continuous improvement within the Councillor group;
- 1.2 Identify areas of strength to be enhanced and improvement opportunities to be realised;
- 1.3 Establish an action plan for Council, if required;
- 1.4 Confirm completion of the self-assessment process through a Council report, ensuring the community that Council is taking ownership of the development of its Mayor and Councillors; and
- 1.5 Report on the outcomes of the process to the Audit and Risk Committee, allowing the Committee to oversee the governance of the process and monitor outcomes arising.

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The effectiveness of Council in delivering community outcomes is directly a result of how effective Councillors work together as a group. This Policy is intended to enable Councillors to work together and support each other to continuously improve how they engage effectively as a team to deliver community outcomes.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to the Mayor and Councillors of the South Gippsland Shire Council, guided by an independent (neutral) facilitator and supported as required by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). It also applies to Council's Audit and Risk Committee, which has oversight of the process and requirements to fulfil within the Policy.

3. POLICY PRINCIPLES

The *Councillor Self-Assessment Policy* encourages Councillors to complete a self-assessment process annually to imbed a culture of continuous improvement in the Councillor group. It is aimed at supporting the Council and individual Councillors to effectively fulfil their roles, duties and functions under the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) and for the South Gippsland community. In particular this process will enhance Council's ability to:

- 3.1 Fulfil the Council's purpose to provide good governance in its municipal district for the benefit and wellbeing of the municipal community. A Council provides good governance if it performs its role in accordance with Section 9 of the Act and Councillors perform their roles in accordance with Section 28 of the Act;
- 3.2 Operate in accordance with the overarching governance principles as provided in the Act;
- 3.3 Maintain the highest standards of professional conduct, as required by the Act and committed by all Councillors through the Councillor Code of Conduct;
- 3.4 Achieve the strategic objectives adopted by Council;
- 3.5 Meet Council's integrity and conduct obligations as provided in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the Charter), Council's *Human Rights Policy (C52)* and principles of embracing diversity and inclusiveness; and
- 3.6 Strengthen the capability of Mayors and Councillors to perform their roles confidently and effectively.

Councillors are accountable to the community as a whole and are required under the *Local Government Act 2020* to prioritise achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations. These outcomes are only achieved through the cooperative processes of the Council as a whole, and this Policy seeks to support Councillors to ensure these processes are as effective as possible.

Responsibility for the effectiveness of Council's teamwork sits with all Councillors. The Mayor is responsible for ensuring the self-assessment process is delivered annually, however the value of the process relies on all Councillors participating equally, with a spirit of good will and diligent attention.

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The Mayor will lead the self-assessment process annually, supported by a suitably qualified and experienced independent person appointed to facilitate the process. All Councillors will take part in and contribute to the self-assessment process, in a spirit of collaboration and continuous improvement.

To ensure full and frank participation of Councillors in the self-assessment process, two reports will be completed following completion of the assessment process as follows:

- Open Council report – including confirmation of completion of process, who participated in the process, reasons for any Councillor who did not participate in the process and a summary of key actions arising; and
- Confidential report to Audit and Risk Committee – containing an overview of the process conducted, outcomes derived and detailed action plan.

4. ROLE OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

4.1 Report to the Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee will maintain oversight of the governance surrounding the self-assessment process and support Council in monitoring the outcomes arising.

A report will be provided annually to the Audit and Risk Committee to support transparency and provides assurance for the self-assessment process.

If Councillors do not develop an action plan, or the Council does not endorse the action plan, an explanation for this must be included in the report to the Audit and Risk Committee and the open report to Council.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

In order to comply with its obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020* and maintain the trust and confidence of the community, it is critical that Council and Councillors maintain the highest possible standards of good governance, integrity, ethical behaviour and conduct.

This Policy and the associated procedures mitigate Council's risks by providing an annual opportunity for Councillors to proactively consider how effective they are in meeting these standards and fulfilling these obligations, and identifying and acting on opportunities for improvement if required. The Policy embeds a culture of continuous improvement in the Councillor group, in line with contemporary good governance and leadership practice.

6. IMPLEMENTATION STATEMENT

6.1 Publication of Policy

The Policy will be published on Council's website.



6.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The Mayor will lead the process annually in the first quarter of their elected term, or equivalent time each year if appointed for two or more consecutive years.

The CEO, or delegate, will coordinate the preparation of the Council report and Audit and Risk Committee reports with the Mayor.

The report will be tabled annually in the Audit and Risk Committee Agenda. The Mayor may be invited to speak to the report, providing greater context to the Committee.

The Councillors will actively participate in the completion and return of the survey, along with discussion of the results and development of actions plans. These processes will be undertaken in accordance with the required timelines and process required by the Mayor and Independent Facilitator.

The Independent Facilitator will liaise with the CEO, or delegate, and the Mayor in regard to administering the process, survey and consideration of results.

6.3 Human Rights Charter

This Policy is a key mechanism for providing assurance to the Council that Councillors are meeting their obligations to treat each other, staff and members of the community with dignity and respect, as required by the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and associated obligations.

6.4 Non-compliance with this Policy

Non-participation by the Mayor or individual Councillors with this process, shall be incorporated in the open Council report and in the Audit and Risk Committee confidential annual report, as a measure of transparency.

6.5 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Council will undertake a four-yearly periodic review of this Policy to ensure changes required to strengthen or update the Policy to meet changing circumstances are made in a timely manner, or earlier if changes to legislation or practices require an earlier intervention.



7. LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS

This Policy has been developed to support the Council to comply with its good governance and conduct obligations in line with various legislation, principally the *Local Government Act 2020*.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS	
Legislative Provisions	<i>Local Government Act 2020</i> <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</i> <i>Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014</i> <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010</i>
Council Supporting Documents	<i>Council Plan 2020-2024</i> <i>Governance Rules 2020</i> <i>South Gippsland Shire Council Good Governance Framework</i> <i>Local Law No 2 2020</i> <i>Audit and Risk Committee Charter C08</i> <i>Audit Policy C65</i> <i>Fraud and Corrupt Conduct Policy C19</i> <i>Human Rights Policy C52</i> <i>Information Privacy Policy C22</i>
Related Documents	<i>Councillor Self-Assessment Survey</i> <i>Councillor Self-Assessment Procedures</i>
File Number	<i>D D8410420</i>

8. DEFINITIONS

Council	South Gippsland Shire Council
Councillor	Is an elected member of the Council as defined by the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> (the Act).
Chief Executive Officer / CEO	Is the Chief Executive Officer appointed by Council as defined by the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> (the Act)
Independent Facilitator	Is a suitably qualified person, appointed by Council, who is not a Councillor or Officer of Council, who supports the Mayor to facilitate the self-assessment process.
Mayor	Is the Mayor elected by Council and/or Councillor(s) as defined by the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> (the Act).
Secretariat Support	The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or a delegate appointed by the CEO to assist the Mayor and Independent Facilitator to undertake administrative functions in support of the self-assessment process, including agenda compilation, minute taking and preparation, production and distribution of documents, and scheduling meetings.

REVISION HISTORY			
Version	Approved	Approval Date Range	Sections Modified
1.0	Council Meeting	19 May 2021	New Policy

9. ATTACHMENT

Nil

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