

POLICY

TITLE:	Principal Member (Mayor) Protocol Policy		
DIRECTORATE:	Council		
ADOPTED BY:	Council Resolution:OMC-24/355		
DATE OF ADOPTION:	29 Nov 2024	DATE OF REVIEW:	29 Nov 2026
POLICY NUMBER:	210		
LEGISLATIVE REF:	<i>Local Government Act 2019; Subdivision 5 (the Act)</i>		

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to establish protocols and provide a framework for the Office of the Principal Member in relation to protocols associated with that Office and Council's administrative arrangements.

1.2. Scope

This Policy applies to the Principal Member and of Barkly Regional Council (BRC) – the Mayor, or any person who is delegated to act in the capacity of Mayor.

1.3. Definitions

Principal Member refers to the Mayor of the Council

1.4. Responsibilities

Principal Members are required to adhere to this Policy. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is accountable for the overall management of this Policy.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy is designed to provide a framework for the operational aspects associated with the Office of the Principal Member and its interaction with Council's administration.

2.1 Committing the Council or Council Resources

In accordance with the Local Government Act, an elected member, including the Principal 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 Principal Member has the right to request the CEO 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.

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

One of the roles of the Principal Member is to speak on behalf of the Council as the Council's Principal representative. The Principal 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 Principal 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
- Avoid any admission of legal liability

The Principal Member may express personal opinions, but these must be qualified as such.

2.3 Ex Officio Involvement with External Groups

The Principal 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 Principal Member, however the Council requires that the Principal Member seek Council approval should the role involve:

- Interstate or international travel;
- The use of Council resources (including staff time);
- Resources normally allocated to the Principal Member or
- Resources in excess of the normal support services available to the Principal 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 Principal Member's involvement and the extent of time needed to satisfy the involvement.

2.4 Civic Functions

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

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

2.5 Communicating with Staff

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

At the CEO's discretion, the Principal Member may deal directly with the Directors.

2.6 Acting Principal 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 Principal Member must notify the CEO of their absence, and the delegation of duties to the acting Principal Member, in order for the CEO to commence all administrative procedures relating to the acting Principal Member.

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

2.8 Vehicle – Principal Member and Deputy/Alternate

- Council will make available to the Principal Member a vehicle.
- Council extends to the Principal Member usage of the vehicle (including all fuel and running costs) 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 Principal Member will not be issued with a car as a benefit, but a car will be made available for official council business.

2.9 Partner’s Travel and Personal Running Costs

The Council acknowledges that there are occasions when it is appropriate for the Principal 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 Principal Member.

3. RELEVANT POLICIES

Policies to be read in conjunction with this policy are:

- 1) Code of Conduct (Elected Members)
- 2) Gifts & Benefits (Elected Members and CEO)
- 3) Allowances (Elected Members)
- 4) Conflict of Interest Policy

4. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

4.1. Implementation

Relevant personnel will be made aware of this Policy. It is not a requirement of the Act for this Policy to be published on the Barkly Regional Council website.

4.2. Review

This policy will be reviewed on or before 29 November 2026.

5. VARIATIONS, REVOCATIONS AND/OR CHANGES

Barkly Regional Council reserves the right to revoke and/or amend this policy from time to time as is considered necessary to better manage its business and/or to comply with any legislative requirements.

6. APPROVAL

This policy is approved.

Chris Kelly
Chief Executive Officer



Signature

29 Nov 2024

Dated

END