

Attachment

The following requirements will apply to ARIC chairs and members from **1 July 2024**.

1. Independence requirements for ARIC chairs and independent members

All ARIC chairs and independent members must be independent to ensure they have no real or perceived bias or conflicts of interest that may interfere with their ability to act independently and can provide the council with robust, objective, and unbiased advice about how the council is functioning.

ARIC chairs and independent members cannot:

- currently be a councillor of any NSW council
- be a non-voting representative of the board of the joint organisation
- be a candidate at the last election of the council
- be a person who has held office in the council during its previous term
- be currently employed by the council or joint organisation, or been employed during the last 12 months
- conduct audits of the council on behalf of the Audit Office of NSW
- have a close personal or business relationship with a councillor or a person who has a senior role in the council that may lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest
- currently, or within the last three years, provided any material goods or services (including consultancy, legal, internal audit, and advisory services) to the council which directly affect subjects or issues considered by the ARIC
- be (or have a close family member who is) a substantial shareholder, owner, officer, or employee of a company that has a material business, contractual relationship, direct financial interest or material indirect financial interest with the council or a related entity which could be considered a real or perceived conflict of interest, or
- currently or have previously acted as an advocate of a material interest on behalf of the council or a related entity which could be considered a real or perceived conflict of interest.

Current staff of councils cannot serve as the chair of an ARIC but may serve as an independent member of another council's ARIC provided they meet the independence and eligibility criteria for membership of the council's ARIC and their employer is not participating in a shared arrangement with the other council in relation to the ARIC or the internal audit function.

2. Eligibility requirements for ARIC chairs and members

The persons appointed as a chair or a member of an ARIC must possess the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary to undertake their roles on the ARIC effectively and to ensure the ARIC is able to operate appropriately and effectively to support the council.

The following eligibility criteria for ARIC chairs and members reflects the minimum standards persons must meet to be appointed as the chair or member of a council's ARIC. Councils may require ARIC chairs and members to satisfy more onerous eligibility criteria if they choose to do so.

Eligibility requirements for ARIC Chairs

In addition to meeting the independence requirements set out above, the following eligibility criteria apply to the chair of an ARIC.

Essential criteria

ARIC chairs must demonstrate the following:

- leadership qualities and the ability to promote effective working relationships in complex organisations
- an ability to communicate complex and sensitive assessments in a tactful manner to the head of the council's internal audit function, senior management and the mayor and councillors
- a sound understanding of:
 - the principles of good organisational governance and capacity to understand local government accountability, including financial reporting
 - the business of the council or the environment in which it operates
 - internal audit operations, including selection and review of the head of the council's internal audit function, and
 - risk management principles
- extensive senior level experience in governance and management of complex organisations, an ability to read and understand financial statements and a capacity to understand the ethical requirements of government (including potential conflicts of interest)
- functional knowledge in areas such as risk management, performance management, human resources management, internal and external auditing, financial reporting, accounting, management control frameworks, internal financial controls, governance (including planning, reporting and oversight), or business operations
- a capacity to form independent judgements and a willingness to constructively challenge/question management practices and information, and
- a professional, ethical approach to the exercise of their duties and the capacity to devote the necessary time and effort to the responsibilities of the chair of an ARIC.

Desirable criteria

- possession of a relevant professional qualification or membership (e.g., Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA), CPA Australia (CPA) and Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CA)) is desirable.

Eligibility requirements for ARIC independent members

In addition to meeting the independence requirements set out above, the following eligibility criteria apply to ARIC independent members:

Essential criteria

ARIC independent members must demonstrate the following:

- an ability to read and understand financial statements and a capacity to understand the ethical requirements of government (including potential conflicts of interest)
- functional knowledge in areas such as risk management, performance management, human resources management, internal and external auditing, financial reporting, accounting, management control frameworks, internal financial controls, governance (including planning, reporting and oversight), or business operations
- a capacity to form independent judgements and willingness to constructively challenge/question management practices and information
- a professional, ethical approach to the exercise of their duties and the capacity to devote the necessary time and effort to the responsibilities of an independent member of an ARIC, and

- preparedness to undertake any training on the operation of ARICs recommended by the chair based on their assessment of the skills, knowledge and experience of the independent member.

Desirable criteria

Ideally, independent members of ARICs should also meet the following criteria, but these are not essential:

- extensive senior level experience in governance and management of complex organisations, and
- possession of a relevant professional qualification or membership (e.g., Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA), CPA Australia (CPA) and Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CA)).

Eligibility requirements for non-voting councillor members of ARICs

A councillor must demonstrate the following to be appointed as a non-voting ARIC member:

- an ability to read and understand financial statements and a capacity to understand the ethical requirements of government (including potential conflicts of interest)
- a good understanding of one or more of the following: risk management, performance management, human resources management, internal and external auditing, financial reporting, accounting, management control frameworks, internal financial controls, governance (including planning, reporting and oversight), or business operations
- a capacity to form independent judgements and willingness to constructively challenge/question management practices and information
- a professional, ethical approach to the exercise of their duties and the capacity to devote the necessary time and effort to the responsibilities of a councillor member of an ARIC, and
- preparedness to undertake any training on the operation of ARICs recommended by the chair based on their assessment of the skills, knowledge and experience of the councillor member.

Note: The mayor cannot be appointed as a councillor member on a council's ARIC.

3. Appointment of ARICs

When selecting ARIC members, councils should ensure the ARIC has an appropriate mix of skills, knowledge and experience to successfully implement its terms of reference and add value. An ARIC should have:

- at least one member with financial expertise (for example, a qualified accountant or auditor or other financial professional with experience of financial and accounting matters), and
- a mix of skills and experience in:
 - business
 - financial and legal compliance
 - risk management
 - internal audit, and
 - any specialised business operations of the council, where the ARIC would benefit from having a member with skills or experience in this area.

All ARIC members should have sufficient understanding of the council's financial reporting responsibilities to be able to contribute to the ARIC's consideration of the annual financial statements.

Each ARIC member should also have sufficient time to devote to their responsibilities.

Where possible, councils should ensure that at least one other ARIC member is also qualified to act as the chair if this is ever required.

Note: Councils must undertake a criminal record and financial status (bankruptcy) check of ARIC chairs and members before their appointment.