

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide members of the public with Guidelines in addressing the Council Meeting in the Public Forum and the application form which needs to be completed to be able to address the meeting.

Objectives of the Policy

To provide members of the community with the opportunity to address Councillors on matters falling within the jurisdiction and Charter of Council as outlined in the Local Government Act 1993, with the exception of development applications which are undetermined, or have been the subject of official consultation forums.

The Public Forum at Council meetings seeks to

- improve communication between Council and its residents;
- assist Council in its decision making processes;
- provide an opportunity for members of the community to raise relevant issues with Council in a formal meeting environment; and
- to assist in portraying Council as an open and accessible organisation.

Policy Scope

The policy applies to the members of the community of Warrumbungle Shire Council who wish to address Council in the monthly Council meetings in the Public Forum. The Council meetings are held alternately at the Coonabarabran and Coolah Council Chambers, generally on the third Thursday of the month at 10.00am as per the Council meeting Schedule adopted by Council at each September meeting which is available on Council's website.

This policy does not preclude Council inviting special guest speakers to present Council a matter of particular interest or issues

Background

This policy has been developed in order to enhance Public consultation and contribution to the decision making of Council's decisions and are therefore encouraged and facilitated by this policy.

Definitions

Chairperson means for a meeting of the Council who is the Mayor or in their absence the Deputy Mayor.

Policy Statement

Requests to address Council and the conduct of public addresses are to be submitted to Council in accordance with the following guidelines.

Any person may make a request to submit a question to, or address the Council in Public Forum on any issue having relevance to the responsibilities and jurisdiction of Warrumbungle Shire Council.

Members of the public who wish to address the meeting on particular matters are invited to register by phone or in person with Council prior to the Council meeting setting out issues they wish to address.

- 1. Members of the public wishing to address a Council meeting must complete an Agreement form and sign on the day*
- 2. All requests must be received by the General Manager by 4.00pm on the Tuesday afternoon prior to the monthly meeting.*

The proceedings of all Council Meetings, unless closed to the public in special circumstances as per the Local Government Act 1993 requirements, are in public session. Any member of the public can be present to listen or take notes. Speakers do not have absolute privilege (parliamentary privilege) in respect of anything said or any material presented to the Meeting. All speakers are advised that they do not enjoy any special protection from defamation arising from comments made during the presentation before Council and should therefore refrain from voicing defamatory remarks or person defamatory statements against any individual.

The right of a member of the public to address the meeting will be at the absolute discretion of the Chairperson. The Chairperson will generally give first preference to those speakers who have an interest in a matter on the agenda for the meeting.

Any person addressing the meeting must direct the presentation through the Chairperson.

- 3. The Chairperson should be addressed as Mr Mayor, Madam Mayor, Mr Chairperson or Madam Chairperson, as the case may be.*
- 4. A maximum of five (5) speakers will be permitted to speak at each meeting.*

Each presentation shall be limited to a maximum of five (5) minutes at the Mayor's discretion plus question time.

- 5. Speakers nominating the same subjects may be requested to nominate one spokesperson to speak for everyone so as to save time and repetition.*
- 6. Speakers may address Council once on a matter, unless new "significant" information is being considered by Council, in which case you must advise why you believe this warrants a further address to Council.*
- 7. Information is permitted to be circulated at the meeting.*
- 8. At discretion of the Mayor the matter may be dealt with by Mayoral Minute or notice of motion for report to be brought back for consideration*

Each speaker is required to state their name and address, organisation (if applicable) and interest in the issue before speaking.

Presentations should be respectful, courteous, based on facts and be concise.

Personal allegations against Councillors and/or staff or other members of the public may not be made. The rights of other people must be observed at all times. A member of the

public making such allegations forfeits immediately the opportunity to address the meeting. The Chairperson shall insist that an offending speaker cease speaking. At the conclusion of an address a question and answer period is available for Councillors to clarify issues raised in the address. The opportunity to address the meeting enables you to provide your argument of opinion. However, it does not provide the opportunity for debate or to ask questions of the Councillors or Council Officers. Councillors are not to enter into any general debate with speakers.

Following the address the person will be asked to return to their seat in the public gallery.

Members of the public are not permitted to interact with Councillors during presentations or the conduct of the meeting, other than as set out within these guidelines.

Members of the public may quietly enter and leave the meeting at any time. Speakers in the Public Forum will be subject to the same rules and regulations relating to behaviour in Council's Code of Meeting Practice, as apply to others who participate in the meeting.

A member of the public may as provided by section 10(2)(a) or (b) of the Act, be expelled from a meeting of a Council for engaging in or having engaged in disorderly conduct at the meeting.

Responsibilities

The General Manager and the Chairman (Mayor) are responsible for the application and enforcement of the policy during Council Meetings.

Associated Documents

Warrumbungle Shire Council Code of Meeting Practice,
NSW Local Government Act (1993)
NSW Local Government (General) Regulations (2005)

Getting Help

Manager Administration and Customer Services
Department: Corporate Services

Version Control

Review Date: September 2016
Staff Member Responsible for Review: Manager Administration and Customer Services

Policy Name	Action	Resolution No.	Date
Council Meeting Public Forum Policy	Endorsed	159/1415	20 November 2014

Public Forum Speaker Agreement

Date of Council Meeting: / /

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Email:

I am representing the following Organisation/Group (if applicable)

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Do you wish to:

- ☐ Make a Statement
- ☐ Make a Request of Council
- ☐ Address an Agenda Item on the Business Paper

Please provide details of matter to be discussed

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Declaration

I agree to comply with the Council's Code of Meeting Practice in relation to order at meetings and to comply with the directions of the Chairperson in this regard and will refrain from making and insult, allegation or person reflection against any person, present or not at the meeting, during the course of my address to Council and any answers that I may give in response to questions from Councillors. I have read and understood the following guidelines:

- Each speaker is required to state their name and address, organisation (if applicable) and interest in the issue before speaking.
- Presentations should be respectful, courteous, based on facts and be concise.
- Personal allegations against Councillors and/or staff or other members of the public may not be made. The rights of other people must be observed at all times. A member of the public making such allegations forfeits immediately the opportunity to address the meeting. The Chairperson shall insist that an offending speaker cease speaking.
- At the conclusion of an address a question and answer period is available for Councillors to clarify issued raised in the address. The opportunity to address the meeting enables you to provide your argument of opinion. However, it does not provide the opportunity for debate or to ask questions of the Councillors or Council Officers. Councillors are not to enter into any general debate with speakers.
- Following the address the person will be asked to return to their seat in the public gallery.
- Members of the public are not permitted to interact with Councillors during presentations or the conduct of the meeting, other than as set out within these guidelines.

..... Date / /

(Signature)