

QUESTION TIME AT COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL MEETINGS

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| Policy Type: Council Policy Policy Owner: Governance & Compliance Program Manager | Policy No. CP- 014 Last Review Date: 18 October 2016 |
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POLICY OBJECTIVES

To enable the orderly and effective management of question time at meetings, where such meeting are open to the public.

POLICY SCOPE

Ordinary and Special Council meetings and Committee meetings that are open to the public.

POLICY STATEMENT

The *Local Government Act 1995 (The Act)* and the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*, set minimum standards for the conduct of question time at Committee Meetings, Ordinary Meetings of Council and Special Council meetings, where meetings are open to the public.

In accordance with The Act and Regulations, the minimum time of fifteen minutes will be allocated at the commencement of a meeting prior to the debate of any matter that requires a decision to be made by the Council or the Committee. Question Time provides for questions to be raised by members of the public and responded to at the meeting (Question Time).

The Presiding Member, or the majority of Elected Members present, may agree to an extension of Question Time.

For the purposes of ensuring that question time is conducted in an orderly and effective manner and to ensure an accurate record of the questions are maintained, questions are to be submitted in writing prior to the commencement of Question Time.

Questions raised at Committee or Special Meetings of the Council must relate to matters relating to the purpose of the meeting or to a function of the Committee.

The Presiding Member may accept or reject the question, or determine that any complex questions requiring research, be answered in writing following the meeting and included in the Minutes.

The Presiding Member may nominate a Member or Officer to answer the questions.

In consideration of the limited time available for Question Time, the Presiding Member may limit the amount of questions raised by an individual member of public in order to enable other members of the public to have an equal opportunity to ask their question/s.

No debate or discussion will be permitted on any question or answer.

In addition to question time during the meeting, the Mayor and Elected Members may make themselves available after the meeting to meet members of the public to answer any questions however they will not form part of the record of the meeting due to the meeting having been closed.

Public Question Time at Agenda Briefing Forums

- a) Council recognises that Agenda Briefing Forums, as currently structured, are not Prescribed meetings within the meaning of the *Local Government Act* in respect to the matter of Public Question Time;
- b) Council, as a matter of policy, allows a public question time at its Agenda Briefing Forums subject to the following requirements;
 - questions can be asked by any resident, ratepayer or representative of a corporate ratepayer in the City of Melville;
 - questions must be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) *by 10.00am on the day before the start of the ABF* (for avoidance of
 - doubt if an ABF commences at 6.30pm on a Tuesday, the written question must be received by the CEO *by 10.00am on the preceding day unless that day is a Public Holiday in which case the question must be received by 10.00am on the day of the ABF.*
 - if the person asking the question is not seen to be present in the Council Chamber by the Presiding Member, when the question is read, the question will be taken on notice and responded to in writing to the questioner;
 - the public question time will last for 15 minutes, except where all submitted questions have been answered prior to 15 minutes elapsing, unless a majority of Councillors present at the ABF indicate to the Presiding Member it should be extended;
 - *Only questions specifically relating to an item on the particular ABF agenda, as determined by the Presiding Member, will be responded to.*
 - the general provisions of the *Local Government Act* as they relate to Public Question Time at Prescribed Council meetings will guide the conduct and management of Public Question Time at ABFs in addition to this Policy.

Other References Applicable to this Policy

Legislative

- Local Government Act 1995 section 5.24
- Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 clauses 5, 6 & 7.

Delegated Authority No:



ORIGIN/AUTHORITY

ITEM NO.

REVIEWS

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| Community & Technical Services Committee | 04/07/2006 | C06/5020 |
| Ordinary Meeting of Council | 15/12/2009 | C09/5097 |
| Ordinary Meeting of Council | 15/11/2011 | C11/5199 |
| Ordinary Meeting of Council | 10/12/2013 | C13/5341 |
| Ordinary Meeting of Council | 8/12/2015 | M15/5458 |
| Ordinary Meeting of Council | 18/10/2016 | 17.1 |