

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AT COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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| Policy Type: Council Policy | Policy No. CP- 014 |
| Policy Owner: Manager Governance and Property | Last Review Date: 21 June 2022 |

POLICY OBJECTIVES

The Council is committed to understanding the community's needs and aspirations in its decision making process wherever possible. The ability for community members to equitably and effectively participate in the local government process by asking questions during Public Question Time is an important part of our community engagement processes. This allows the Council and City to better identify the issues of importance in the community, and assists the public in being better informed on the governing of the district.

POLICY SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and direction on the management of legislated Public Question Time and to ensure the effective and equitable use of the time allocated for this purpose.

This policy applies to Ordinary and Special Meetings of the Council, Agenda Briefing Forums and Committee Meetings with delegated powers or duties in accordance with section 5.24 of the *Local Government Act 1995* and Regulation 6(1) of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*.

POLICY STATEMENT

The *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* requires that a minimum of 15 minutes be allocated at every Council meeting, and other meetings as prescribed, for the public to ask questions of the Council, and have them responded to, and that each person wishing to ask a question be given equal and fair opportunity to ask the question and receive a response.

The *City of Melville Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Local Law 2022* provides the Council's resolved position on processes associated with members of the public asking questions at Public Question Time.

Allocation of Time

Public Question Time is for a period of 15 minutes and may be extended to a maximum of 30 minutes, in 5 minutes increments, by resolution of the Council.

To give equal and fair opportunity to each member of the public that wishes to ask questions, each questioner will be limited to one question and one supplementary question and shall be limited to 2 minutes to ask their question/s. Questions with multiple parts will be considered as separate questions.



Presenting a Question

Members of the public wishing to ask a question at a meeting are to ask their question in person, or to nominate a person to ask their question in person.

Complex questions or those related to matters on the agenda and requiring a response at the meeting are considered "questions on notice" should be submitted by close of business the Tuesday before the meeting, or four clear business days prior to the meeting.

Questions submitted to the Agenda Briefing Forum or a Special Meeting of Council must relate to matters on the agenda

A member of the public may, prior to the commencement of the meeting, register their intent to ask a question at the meeting.

When asking a question at a meeting, a member of the public is to:

- provide a written copy of the question; and
- state their name; and
- direct their question to the Presiding Member; and
- ask their question clearly and concisely; and
- not include any statement other than the minimum information necessary to understand the question; and
- not provide false or misleading information, or use offensive or derogatory language.

The Presiding Member shall determine who is to respond to a question, or determine that the question is to be taken on notice.

If the question relates to a matter to which a relevant person (elected member or employee) has an interest, he or she will:

- declare that he or she has an interest in the matter; and
- allow another person to respond.

Where a question is taken on notice:

- a response will be provided in writing,
- a copy of the question and the response provided to all elected members at the same time;
- summaries of the question and the response will be included in the agenda document of the next meeting.

The Presiding Member may decide a public question will not be answered in accordance with the requirements of the *City of Melville Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Local Law 2022*.

Summaries of the questions asked at a meeting and the responses given will be included in the minutes of the meeting, unless the question is taken on notice.



DEFINITIONS

Immediate Family someone's spouse, parents and grandparents, children and grandchildren, brother and sisters, mother-in-law and father-in-law, brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, daughters-in-law and sons-in-law and adopted, half and step members.

Public Question Time Under section 5.24 of the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act) and the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* (the Regulations) time must be made at every Council meeting (whether ordinary or special) and every meeting of a committee with delegated powers or duties, for members of the public to ask questions and have them responded to.

Question A question is a sentence worded or expressed so as to elicit information, it is not a Statement.

Question on Notice means a question received in advance of a meeting, as specified, to enable a response to be prepared.

Supplementary Question means a further question that relates to the original question, for the purpose of providing clarity.

References that may be applicable to this Policy

Legislative Requirements:

Local Government Act 1995
Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996
City of Melville Local Government (Meeting Procedures) 2022

Procedure, Process Maps, Work Instructions:

Other Plans, Frameworks, Documents Applicable to Policy:

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 |
| Ordinary Meeting of Council | 11/12/2018 | M18/5657 |
| Ordinary Meeting of Council | 21/06/2022 | M22/5918 |