

Division 8 – Questions From the Community

55. Question Time

- 55.1 There must be a public question time at every Council meeting fixed under Rule 9 to enable members of the public to submit questions to the Council, except in meetings that are closed to the public in accordance with section 66(2) of the Act.
- 55.2 Public question time will not exceed 30 minutes in duration, unless by Council resolution, in which case the time may be extended for one period of up to 15 minutes.
- 55.3 Questions submitted to the Council:
- 55.3.1 must be in writing, state the name and address of the person submitting the question and the date;
 - 55.3.2 must be sent electronically or received by the Chief Executive Officer prior to 12noon on the day of the Council meeting; and
 - 55.3.3 will have the details of the authors verified as far as practicable
- 55.4 Members of the public may speak to up to three (3) minutes, and may make statements or ask questions on general matters, or those that relate to a topic on the agenda. Questions may only be asked of Council and may not be directed to individual Councillors or officers.
- 55.5 No person may submit more two (2) questions to be answered at any one (1) meeting. A question may be split into a maximum of two parts only. If more than two parts to a question are received, only the first two parts will be considered. Similarly, if more than two questions are received to be answered in person, only the first two question will be considered. All parts of the question must be relevant to the same subject.
- 55.6 All questions and answers must be as brief as possible, and no further questions will be taken from the answers given, and no discussion may be allowed other than by Councillors for the purposes of clarification.
- 55.7 A maximum of three (3) questions will be heard on any one subject. Like questions may be grouped together and a single answer provided. Questions in relation to the listed agenda items will be given priority, and if time allows, questions about items other than those listed will be considered.
- 55.8 Questions that relate to items on the meeting agenda will not be referred to officers. A Councillor may facilitate a question received at the time on the agenda that the item is to be discussed.
- 55.9 Members of the public submitting questions or making statements should be in person in the gallery at the Council meeting. For members of the public unable to attend the meeting in person, consideration may be given for the request to attend a meeting via electronic communications.
- 55.9.1 where the requirements to present a question in writing and/or in English unreasonably prevents or hinders participation in public question time, assistance with submitting questions is available from Council, via an interpreter service if required;
 - 55.9.2 the Chair may, subject to rule 55.9.3, permit a representative to attend or read a question on behalf of a person who is unable to attend the meeting, or read a question, because of a personal characteristic or attribute protected by law, such as (but not limited to) having a disability, their age or status as a carer;
 - 55.9.3 the Chair shall not exercise his or her discretion to permit a representative in accordance with sub-Rule 55.9.2 on the ground of inconvenience alone
- 55.10 Members of the public are requested to ensure their input remains constructive and of value to Council decision-making.
- 55.11 The Chair may respond or may nominate an Officer to respond to a question.
- 55.12 The Chair or the CEO may require a question to be put on notice. If a question is put on notice, a written copy of the answer will be sent to the person who asked the question.
- 55.13 The CEO may advise the Council that the reply to a question should be given in a meeting closed to members of the public. The CEO must state briefly the reason why the reply should be so given and, unless Council resolves to the contrary, the reply to such question must be given so.

55.14 A written response to question will be sent to any person who chooses not to ask a question to Council in person. A copy of these questions and responses will be tabled and inserted into the minutes of the following Council meeting.

55.15 The name of the questioner, the question and the response (if the question and response are read out at the meeting) must be recorded in the Minutes, as an official record of the questions dealt with at the Meeting.

55.16 A question may be disallowed by the Chair if the Chair determines that it:

55.16.1 relates to a matter outside the duties, functions and powers of the Council;

55.16.2 is potentially defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance;

55.16.3 deals with a subject matter already answered;

55.16.4 is aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or a member of Council staff;

55.16.5 relates to personnel matters;

55.16.6 relates to the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer;

55.16.7 relates to industrial matters;

55.16.8 relates to contractual matters;

55.16.9 relates to proposed developments;

55.16.10 relates to legal advice;

55.16.11 relates to matters affecting the security of Council property;

55.16.12 relates to any other matter which the Council considers would prejudice the Council or any person; or

55.16.13 relates to electoral matter during an election period,

55.17 Any question which has been disallowed by the Chair must be made available to any other Councillor upon request.