

MEMBER POLICY – COUNCIL FORUMS

PURPOSE

Council may meet together with staff from time to time in meetings to be known as Council Forums as set out in the *Local Government Guideline Number 5 – Council Forums*.

OBJECTIVE

This policy is designed to adopt rules and processes that are in line with Department of Local Government Guideline Number 5 – Council Forums.

POLICY FRAMEWORK AND DEFINED TERMS

"Council Forum Program" is named as such so that a distinction can be made between a *Council Forum Program* where no decisions are made by Council and a *Council Meeting Agenda* where decisions are made by Council in the form of Council Resolutions.

"Presentations" is included *as a title* within the Council Forum Program for the purpose of (Consultants and/or the CEO and his Senior Management Team) making "presentations" in relation to *Matters for discussion* as described below. Note: "Presentations" means the act of presenting information on a particular topic.

"Public Questions" is included *as a title* within the Council Forum Program for the purpose of an individual member of the public using the opportunity to ask a question relating to a matter on the Council Forum Program. Public Questions may be made in accordance with Council's Public Question Time Information Sheet Guidelines.

"Submissions" is included *as a title* within the Council Forum Program for the purpose of an individual member of the public, who can demonstrate that they are affected (whether adversely or favourably) by a matter on the Council Forum Program making a submission. Public submissions may be made in accordance with Council's Public Submission Information Sheet Guidelines.

"Agenda Forum" *is a heading* on the Council Forum Program to provide opportunity for clarification about Agenda Forum Items.

No decisions (other than those to facilitate the Council Forum) are to be made as the Council Forum is not a decision-making forum. No debate is permitted, as this rightly belongs at the forthcoming formal Ordinary Meeting of Council. Notes are to be retained in respect to the business of the forum.

"Agenda Forum Items" included within the Council Forum Program are items that

- (a) provide an opportunity for Councillors to ask questions and seek additional information in respect to report items for the forthcoming Ordinary Meeting/s of Council;
- (b) Enable the Administration to make presentations on report items for the forthcoming Ordinary Meeting/s of Council;

- (c) provide an opportunity for members of the public (affected by the subject matter of a report item) to make submissions to Council.

"Concept Forum" is a heading on the Council Forum Program to provide opportunity to discuss Concept Forum Items.

No decisions (other than those to facilitate the Council Forum) are to be made as the Council Forum is not a decision-making forum. No debate is permitted, as this rightly belongs at the forthcoming formal Ordinary Meeting of Council.

Notes are to be retained in respect to the business of the forum.

To enable a free flow of communication, the Shire of Quairading Code of Conduct will be the guide in respect to the conduct of the forum.

"Concept Forum Items" included within the Council Forum Program are items that: -

- (a) provide an opportunity for the Chief Executive Officer and his Senior Management Team to inform Councillors of significant and strategic matters or projects being progressed by the Shire;
- (b) enable Councillors to identify matters for future consideration by Council;
- (c) enable Councillors to ask questions and seek additional information in respect to matters for future consideration by Council;
- (d) Enable the Administration to obtain guidance in respect to the early development of matters for future consideration by Council including obtaining the services of external Consultants to provide presentations to Council on matters for future consideration by Council;
- (e) Provide an opportunity to discuss, propose, formulate philosophies, ideas, strategies and concepts for the development of local government and the district that it serves.

"Confidential Matters" - both Agenda and Concept Forums may include Confidential Matters, which is dealt with according to Section 5.93 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

RULES

- (a) The President is required to chair Council Forums. In the absence of the President the forum is to be chaired by the Deputy President. In the absence of both the President and the Deputy President those present are required to appoint an elected member to chair the meeting.
- (b) Elected members and staff are to disclose financial or proximity interests and interests affecting impartiality in relation to matters discussed at forums. Persons disclosing a financial or proximity interest are required to leave the room while the matter in which they have declared an interest is discussed;
- (c) Forums are not Council Meetings and may not make decisions nor resolutions;
- (d) All questions and discussions are to be directed through the chair. Forums may not be used to debate matters listed for resolution at a Council meeting.

Objectives

- (a) Council Forums may generally be open to the public, except when matters of a confidential nature are discussed. The President is to be guided by the principles set

out in Section 5.23 of the *Local Government Act 1995* when determining when to go behind closed doors.

- (b) Notes are to be retained in respect to the business of the Council Forum. The Notes are to be distributed within five days following the Council Forum. The Notes are to be "received" by Council at its next Ordinary Meeting of Council.

Quorums

The quorum for a meeting of a council or committee is at least 50% of the number of offices (whether vacant or not) of members of the council or the committee in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*. This may also apply to meetings of the Council Forum.

Council Forum Program

As stated above, items for consideration at Council Forums may be designated as either an Agenda Forum Item or Concept Forum Item within the Council Forum Program. The program is to consist of the following headings:

1. **DECLARATION OF OPENING**
2. **RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES**
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
4. **PRESENTATIONS**
5. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (relating to the contents of the program)**
6. **PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS (relating to the contents of the program)**
7. **AGENDA FORUM MATTERS**
8. **CONCEPT FORUM MATTERS**
9. **CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS**
10. **STATUS REPORT**
 - 10.1 Project Follow up Status Report.
11. **MEETING CLOSURE**

Distribution of Program

The Council Forum Program is to be distributed to Elected Members at least three days prior to the meeting.

Council Forum Schedule

- (a) Council Forums are to be convened two weeks prior to a scheduled Ordinary Meeting of Council; and
- (b) Council may set the date, time and duration of Council Forums when adopting its meeting schedule for Ordinary Meetings of Council.

GUIDELINES

Department of Local Government Guideline Number 5 – Council Forums

Local Government Act 1995

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Department of Local Government Guideline Number 5 – Council Forums.

Record of Policy Review					
Version	Author	Council Adoption	Resolution	Reason for Review	Review Date
01	Neville Hale (ACEO)	28 September 2017	56-17/18	New Policy	
02	Graeme Fardon	27 September 2018	41-18/19	<i>Policy Review Project – 1/09/2018</i>	
03	Graeme Fardon	17 December 2020	97-20/21	Biennial Policy Review	December 2020