

GOVERNANCE - PUBLIC INTERACTIONS WITH COUNCIL

Date Adopted:	14 November 2018
Adopted By:	Council
Review Due:	2022
Responsible Officer:	Governance Coordinator
RM8 No:	D/18/94709

PURPOSE

This Policy sets out the types of public interactions that are available between the Southern Grampians Shire Council and the community members of the Southern Grampians Shire. The purpose of this Policy is to provide an overview of the ways in which community members can interact with Council at its Meetings and by making customer requests.

APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This Policy applies to community members of the Southern Grampians Shire. This Policy does not apply to Councillors or Council Staff in their professional capacity.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

DEPUTATIONS

A deputation is a presentation to Council. It is not limited to topics on the agenda at the Ordinary Council Meeting.

Members of the public are welcome to make a deputation to Council at its Ordinary Meetings, held on the second Wednesday of every month.

Anyone wishing to make a deputation to Council must complete the Request to Make a Deputation form and forward it to the Chief Executive Officer at 111 Brown Street, Hamilton no later than **2 days before the Ordinary Council Meeting**.

Speaking time is limited to 3 minutes per person. Organisations may be represented at the deputation to Council by not more than 4 representatives. The names of the representatives to attend must be advised in writing to the Chief Executive Officer and 1 of the representatives to attend must be nominated as the principal spokesperson for the deputation.

Deputations wishing to make a written submission to the Council must provide a copy of the submission to the Chief Executive Officer prior to the Ordinary Council Meeting. The written submission will be distributed to Councillors before the Meeting.

The Mayor and Chief Executive Officer are jointly authorised to invite individuals and/or organisations to make a submission to the Public Deputations section of the Ordinary Council Meeting on any subject of local concern or affecting the welfare of the Southern Grampians Shire community.

All members of the public addressing the Council must extend due courtesy and respect to the Council and the processes under which it operates. If a member of the public fails to do this the Chairperson can remove them from the Chambers.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Members of the public are welcome to ask questions of Council at its Ordinary Meetings, held on the second Wednesday in every month.

A maximum of two questions can be asked per person.

Question time is not an opportunity to make public statements or to provide gratuitous advice.

Questions must:

1. Not pre-empt debate on any matter listed on the agenda of the Ordinary Meeting at which the question is asked
2. Not refer to matters designated as confidential under the Local Government Act 1989.
3. Be clear and unambiguous and not contain argument on the subject.
4. Not be derogatory, defamatory or embarrassing to any Councillor, member of staff, ratepayer or member of the public, nor relate to a matter beyond the power of Council.

The Mayor will have the right to accept or reject any question.

The Mayor will state the name of the person asking each question.

A Councillor or officer may decline to answer a question, or seek to have the question put on notice, or provide a detailed written response within ten days.

All questions must be submitted through completion of the Public Question Time form, and be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer at 111 Brown Street, Hamilton. All questions must be received by no later than **5pm on the Monday before the Ordinary Meeting of Council.**

ADDRESSING COUNCIL IN RELATION TO AGENDA ITEMS

Members of the public are welcome to address Council Meetings in relation to any items on the public agenda.

Anyone wishing to address Council must complete the Request to Address Council form and forward it to the Chief Executive Officer at 111 Brown Street, Hamilton no later than **12 noon on the day of the Council Meeting.**

Speaking time is limited to 3 minutes per person.

All members of the public addressing the Council must extend due courtesy and respect to the Council and the processes under which it operates. If a member of the public fails to do this the Chairperson can remove them from the Chambers. All members of the public must also comply with Council's Public Participation at Council Meetings policy in relation to meeting procedures and public participation at meetings.

PETITIONS

A petition is a formal written document, signed by many people, which requests action in relation to an issue. Petition is one of the traditional ways in which community members can make a request directly to Council in relation to a Council issue.

Petitions must adhere to certain standards to ensure that the intended message is conveyed in a clear and succinct manner. Some of the requirements for submitting a petition to Council are:

- A petition should be address to the Council, a Councillor or the CEO;
- A petition must be clearly written, typed or printed, and be signed by at least 5 people;
- Every page of the petition must contain the request of the petitioners/signatories;
- The request suggestion or grievance must be set out using language that is respectful and not offensive;
- Every petitioner/signatory must sign the petition only once, directly onto the petition form;
- Every page of the petition must be a single page of paper. It is not acceptable for signatures to be cut and pasted or otherwise affixed or transferred to the petition;
- The pages of a petition must be free from erasures and alterations.

A submission can be either posted or delivered in person to the Chief Executive Officer at 111 Brown Street, Hamilton. All petitions must be received by no later than **5pm on the Monday before the Ordinary Meeting of Council.**

Once the petition is received it will be presented to Council at the next Ordinary Meeting. The Council may resolve that the petition be received and referred to the relevant area of Council for investigation. A Report will then be prepared and presented to a subsequent Ordinary Council Meeting for a formal decisions. However, if the petition relation to an operational matter, Council must refer it to the relevant Director for consideration. Once a decision has been made in relation to the matters raised in the petition, the head/principal petitioner will be advised in writing of the decision.

REQUESTS, ENQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS

Community members are encouraged to submit requests, enquiries and complaints to Council. The best way for this to be done is via email. All requests, enquiries and complaints should be submitted to council@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au The requests, enquiries or complaint will then be forwarded to the relevant area of Council for action and response.

Whilst requests, enquiries and complaints can be submitted to Council in other ways, via telephone, in person, or through discussions with a Councillor, email is the preferred option as it allows the actions and response of any matters to be easily tracked and monitored.

All requests, enquiries or complaints received by community members are uploaded in Council's CRM system. The CRM system allows Council to record, track and report upon on requests, enquiries or complaints received and the actions taken.

REVIEW

This policy must be reviewed a minimum of once every 4 years.