

<h2>COUNCIL MEETINGS</h2>	Date Adopted:	11 March 2020
	Adopted By:	Council
	Review Due:	March 2024
	Responsible Officer:	Governance Coordinator
	Directorate:	Organisational Development, Community and Corporate Services
	EDRMS No:	D/19/39908

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide information regarding the various opportunities for the community to participate in Council Meetings, and set out the general procedures that will be followed in preparing for and conducting Council Meetings.

Specifically, the policy will discuss:

- the distribution of the Council meeting agendas;
- the distribution of the Council meeting minutes;
- the arrangements for audio recording of proceedings at Council meetings;
- live streaming of Council Meetings;
- deputations;
- public question time;
- petitions;
- addressing council in relation to agenda items; and
- privacy provisions relating to the personal details collected as part of Council proceedings.

## DEFINITIONS

**Council** means Southern Grampians Shire Council

**Council Meetings** means Ordinary and Special Council Meetings

## APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This policy applies to ordinary and special Council meetings of the Southern Grampians Shire Council open to the public.

This policy supports the Southern Grampians Shire Council Meeting Procedures Local Law.

## GENERAL PROVISIONS

### AGENDAS

#### Distribution to Councillors

To facilitate the opportunity for detailed examination and consideration of reports, the Council meeting agenda will be distributed to Councillors not less than two (2) business days before every Ordinary meeting.

Under normal circumstances, the agenda will be provided electronically to Councillors no later than 9:00am on the Friday prior to each Ordinary meeting.

Agendas for Special meetings will be distributed to Councillors within a reasonable time before any such meeting.

#### Public Exhibition

Agendas for all Ordinary and Special meetings of Council will be made available for public inspection by 9:00am on the Monday prior to each meeting on the Council website:

- [Council Meeting Agendas and Minutes](#)

The Council website makes available the past 12 months of meeting agendas and minutes. Should earlier copies of agendas or minutes be required, queries can be directed to customer service on (03) 5573 0444.

### 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. Ordinary Meetings are generally 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 **5pm on the Monday before the Ordinary Meeting of Council**.

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. Ordinary Meetings are generally held on the second Wednesday of 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 or to [council@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au). 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 this policy in relation to meeting procedures and 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 addressed 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 petition template is available on the internet, use of this template is not a requirement but petitions submitted to Council should comply with this policy and be in a similar format to the template provided.

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.

## RECORDINGS OF MEETINGS

At the commencement of each meeting, the Chair of the meeting will notify members of the public that the meeting is being recorded.

The recording of proceedings at all Ordinary and Special Meetings of Council by media representatives shall be permitted.

No other recording shall be permitted other than what is stated in this policy.

Council's audio recordings of Council meetings will be retained within its Electronic Records Management system.

The agenda remains the true record of proceeding, audio is for information only.

## LIVE STREAMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

To ensure Council meetings are accessible and transparent, Council may stream Council meetings to its official Southern Grampians Shire Council Facebook page, subject to accessibility.

Recordings and livestreaming will enable community members who are unable to attend the meetings in person to still view and listen to the proceedings.

By attending a Council meeting, those present may be recorded or their image captured. Where captured, consent is automatically given for those attending. Notices of this effect will be on display in the Council Chambers (or alternate venue). Care will be taken to minimise effects on people's privacy.

No other video recording shall be permitted other than what is stated in this policy.

## MINUTES

Council meeting minutes are uploaded to the Council website as soon as possible following the Council meeting. However, minutes are not confirmed by Council until the resolution at the next Ordinary Council Meeting.

If any changes are required to the draft minutes on the Council website, please contact Customer Service on (03) 5573 0444.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

This policy will be published on the Council website.

## **CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLIANCE**

It is considered that this policy is compatible with the relevant human rights identified in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*.

## **REVIEW**

This Policy must be reviewed a minimum of every four years.

This Policy came into operation on 10 December 1997 and was reviewed on:

- 10 February 1999
- 9 April 2014

**END**