

Guidelines for Speaking at Council Meetings

Any member of the public can request to address the Council either in relation to an agenda item or any other matter.

How are decisions made at Council Meetings?

Each meeting the Administrator will consider a wide range of issues, including development applications, engineering projects, financial matters and items of general community interest.

In making decisions on these matters, the Administrator will consider a variety of information including:

- Reports prepared by Council staff
- Legislative requirements that may relate to the matter
- Results of their own research and enquiry
- Written or verbal submissions from the public.

The reports prepared by the Council staff include a recommendation for how the Administrator may address the matter. The Administrator can choose whether or not to accept this recommendation.

How can the public address the meeting?

Members of the public can apply to address Council on either an agenda or non agenda item/s. A Council Meeting has an agenda that deals with a number of items, which includes time for approved members of the public to address the Council.

After the Administrator has heard approved speakers, and asked any questions, he will proceed through the meeting agenda, dealing with each item in turn.

Speakers must be approved by the Administrator. All requests for consideration need to be submitted by 4pm on the day prior to the Council Meeting using the Request to Address Council form.

Tips for making a presentation to Council

The following guidelines will help in preparing a presentation:

- Read the staff report and understand the recommendation to Council.
- Decide whether you are for or against the recommendation.
- If you are part of a group, decide who is going to speak on the group's behalf. Maximum of four speakers per item, two for and two against.
- Complete the Request to Address Council form and confirm you have read the *Guidelines for Speaking at Council Meetings* and will abide by the Guidelines. Approved speakers will need

to advise the Executive Assistant on arrival of their presence and then proceed to the gallery in the Council Chambers.

- Consider whether you have a matter that needs to be declared (if you are speaking about a development application, the law requires you to declare any political donations that have been made to councillors within the past two years. Forms are available from Council).
- Keep your address brief and to the point. Speakers are allowed a maximum of five minutes. If you are not used to public speaking, you may want to practice beforehand to see how you go for time.
- Keep to the main issues of concern. Remember that the Administrator has already read the report and any written submission you may have made.
- Do not bring extra material. Council will not accept any new written information, PowerPoint displays etc at the meeting.
- Be prepared to answer questions. The Administrator may want to clarify something in your presentation.
- Follow the directions of the Administrator. The Administrator has the ultimate say on who can address and will let you know when it is your turn to speak.
- Show courtesy to other speakers. Do not disrupt or interject when other people are making their submissions.

Protocols

Because Council meetings are official functions, governed by law, there are certain protocols that apply. The correct procedures are:

- You may only speak when the Administrator invites you to do so.
- When invited to speak, please come forward and using the microphone provided state your name and the item and/or matter you wish to speak to. You may stand or sit, whichever is more comfortable for you.

Speaking in public

Speakers are reminded that Council meetings are broadcast live via local radio station 2BOB FM and also an audio copy made for Council's records. This includes the address by members of the public, so anything you say in the meeting will be broadcast and recorded. It is important to remember that Council meetings are not covered by "Parliamentary Privilege". This means that if you say anything offensive or defamatory at the meeting about another person you may leave yourself open to legal action.

What's the outcome

After the Administrator has heard all the speakers, he may choose to do one of the following:

- Deal with the matter on the day and make a decision
- Defer the matter to another meeting if he needs more information

If you are not able to wait, you can find out the decision by looking at the Minutes of the meeting on Council's website. The Minutes are available on the Friday after the meeting.

Making a Request to Address Council

Approval to speak will be granted or denied based on a range of factors including but not limited to:

- How many other requests for the item;
- The nature of the item; and
- Legislative provisions that may inhibit your request being fulfilled.

Audio recording

An audio recording of the meeting will be made for minute taking purposes as authorised by the Local Government Act 1993 and may be made available to members of the public where Council is compelled to do so by court order, warrant, subpoena or by any other law. Members of the public addressing the meeting should refrain from divulging personal information about themselves or other individuals or making defamatory statements.