

Public Question Time Rules



Questions asked in person without prior notice

1. Members of the public are invited to ask questions at Council Meetings.
2. Questions asked at an Ordinary Council meeting must relate to a matter that affects the Shire of Murray. Questions asked at a Special Council meeting must relate to the purpose for which the meeting has been called.
3. A register will be provided for those persons wanting to ask questions to enter their name. The Presiding Member may call persons registered to come forward in an order that allows the maximum opportunity for as many people as possible to address the meeting of matters that are listed on the agenda. Persons that come forward are to state their name and full address.
4. Public question time will be limited to two verbal questions per person to allow for others to also have the opportunity to participate. If there is remaining time the Presiding Member will then revert to any person that requested more than two (2) questions be asked within the allotted 15 minutes of Question Time.
5. All questions should be succinct and to the point and not extend beyond 2 (two) minutes.
6. Statements are not permitted unless it is part of the Deputation section of the meeting. Deputations must relate to an item on the Council agenda for that meeting and should be requested in advance to the Chief Executive Officer in writing of the Council Meeting at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Any decision outside of this procedure is to be decided by the Council.
7. Members of the public are encouraged to keep their questions brief to enable everyone who desires to ask a question to have the opportunity to do so.
8. Public question time will be allocated a minimum of 15 minutes and may be extended in intervals of up to 10 minutes by resolution of Council, but the total time allocated for public questions to be asked and responses given is not to exceed 35 minutes in total.
9. Questions are to be directed to the Presiding Member and shall be asked politely, in good faith, and are not to be framed in such a way as to reflect adversely or be defamatory on a particular Elected Member or Shire employee. The Presiding Member shall decide to:
 - i. Accept or reject any question and their decision is final;
 - ii. Nominate a Shire employee to respond to the question; Or;
 - iii. Take a question on notice. In this case a written response will be provided as soon as possible, and included in the agenda of the next Council meeting.
10. Questions and any response will be summarised and included in the minutes of the Council meeting.
11. It is not intended that question time should be used as a means to obtain information that would not be available if it was sought from the Shire's records under Section 5.94 of the Local Government Act 1995 or the Freedom of Information Act 1992 (FOI Act). Where the response to a question/s would require a substantial commitment of Shire's resources, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will determine that it is an unreasonable impost upon the Shire and refuse it. The CEO will advise the member of the public that the information may be sought in accordance with the FOI Act.

Questions in Writing – (Residents and/or ratepayers of the Shire of Murray only)

1. Only Shire of Murray residents and/or ratepayers may submit questions to the Shire in writing.
2. Questions asked at an Ordinary Council meeting must relate to a matter that affects the Shire of Murray. Questions asked at a Special Council meeting must relate to the purpose for which the meeting has been called.
3. The Shire will accept a maximum of five (5) written questions per Shire of Murray resident/ratepayer. To ensure equity and consistency, each part of a multi-part question will be treated as a question in its own right.
4. Questions lodged by 4.00pm on the day immediately prior to the scheduled Council meeting will be responded to, where possible, at the Council meeting. These questions, and their responses, will be distributed to Elected Members and made available to the public in written form at the meeting.
5. The Presiding Member shall decide to accept or reject any written question and their decision is final. Where there is any concern about a question being offensive, defamatory or the like, the Presiding Member will make a determination in relation to the question. Questions determined as offensive, defamatory or the like will not be published.
6. The Presiding Member may rule questions out of order where they are substantially the same as questions previously submitted and responded to.
7. Written questions unable to be responded to at a Council meeting will be taken on notice. In this case, a written response will be provided as soon as possible and included on the agenda of the next Council meeting.
8. A person who submits written questions may also ask questions at a Council meeting and questions asked verbally may be different to those submitted in writing.
9. Questions and any response will be summarised and included in the minutes of the Council meeting.
10. It is not intended that question time should be used as a means to obtain information that would not be available if it was sought from the Shire's records under Section 5.94 of the Local Government Act 1995 or the Freedom of Information Act 1992 (FOI Act). Where the response to a question/s would require a substantial commitment of Shire's resources, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will determine that it is an unreasonable impost upon the Shire and refuse it. The CEO will advise the member of the public that the information may be sought in accordance with the FOI Act.

DISCLAIMER

Responses to questions asked verbally are provided in good faith and as such, should not be relied upon as being either complete or comprehensive.