

## COUNCIL POLICY

## BACKGROUND

Public consultation and contribution to the decision making of Council should enhance the quality of Council's decisions and are therefore encouraged and facilitated by this policy.

## OBJECTIVE

To provide members of the community with the opportunity to address Administrators on matters falling within the jurisdiction and Charter of Council as outlined in the *Local Government Act 1993*, with the exception of development applications which are undetermined, or have been the subject of official consultation forums.

The Public Access Forum seeks to –

- improve communication between Council and its residents;
- assist Council in its decision making processes;
- provide an opportunity for members of the community to raise relevant issues with Council in a formal meeting environment; and
- assist in portraying Council as an open and accessible organisation.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Requests to address Council and the conduct of public addresses are to be submitted to Council in accordance with the terms contained in the accompanying Statement of Procedures.

## STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES

### Applications to address Council -

- must be made in writing on the application form attached to this policy and forwarded to the Administrative Coordinator, Administration + Governance Unit, no later than 12 noon on the working day prior to the day of the meeting;
- wherever possible, a person or group who supports an opposite view to the applicant must be notified and given the opportunity to speak;
- applications shall state the name and address of the applicant, contact telephone number and the issue to be raised;
- any documentation to be provided to Administrators shall either accompany the application or be available for distribution to Administrators prior to the meeting – no written material is able to be circulated during the presentation;
- an application must relate to a matter that falls within the jurisdiction and Charter of Council as outlined in the *Local Government Act, 1993* or a report which is currently before Council for determination. However, this policy excludes –
  - all issues relating to development applications which are in the process of being assessed and are undetermined, have been considered at an Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel meeting, are listed on the Council meeting agenda for determination, or matters which have been the subject of official public consultative forums such as Formal and Informal Facilitation meetings, public meetings and public hearings. 'Official' forums will have provided an invitation to both the objectors and supporters of a matter to come together at a formal meeting in an attempt to resolve contentious issues. Further information in relation to forums for development applications can be accessed through the *Development Assessment and Compliance Notification Policy* and the *Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel Policy*;
  - all representations in respect of tenders that are awaiting determination by Council.
  - all matters where legal action has been commenced involving Council and where Council is in receipt of or has served:
    - a Statement of Claim
    - a Summons for Information or
    - a Subpoena to attend Court
  - all staff related matters.
- addresses will be received at meetings of Council;
- applications in respect of current meeting Agenda items will be given priority;
- applicants who have previously addressed Council on a particular issue, cannot address another meeting on the same matter;
- the General Manager will determine the applications in the event of there being more than the maximum number of applicants;
- if there are more than the maximum number of applications, Administrators will be informed of those applications not included for presentation;
- a list of applicants speaking under the Public Access Forum, together with information on the subject of the briefing, is to be made available to Administrators at the meeting.

## **Public Address**

- the public forum shall be limited to a period of thirty (30) minutes, unless extended by Council;
- each address shall be limited to five (5) minutes, ie maximum of six (6) addresses per meeting. The Chairperson will notify speakers when there is 30 seconds remaining;
- there shall be a maximum of two (2) speakers in favour and two (2) speakers against a particular issue and groups are required to nominate a representative to speak on their behalf;
- speakers must only speak in relation to the subject stated on their application;
- speakers shall not debate the issue with Administrators and staff;
- Administrators are able to ask questions of the speaker on a point of clarification;
- all speakers are advised that they do not enjoy any protection from defamation arising from comments made during the presentation and should therefore refrain from voicing defamatory remarks or personal defamatory statements against any individual;
- the Chairperson can order a person to cease speaking if he/she considers that the speaker is making inappropriate or offensive comments, is abusive, is making comments that are considered not in the public interest or is not complying with the rules of meeting procedure as outlined in Council's Code of Meeting Practice.

## **Minutes**

- minutes must include a brief synopsis of the presentation/s;
- wherever possible, speakers should provide the Minute Clerk with a written summary of their presentation, prior to commencement of the meeting. Following the Council meeting, the written summary will be referred to the appropriate Division for notation.

## **Response**

- if the address relates to an Agenda item the issue raised by the speaker shall be dealt with when the particular Agenda item is considered by Council;
- no formal response will be provided to the applicant.

WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC ACCESS FORUM

APPLICATION FORM

Please complete this request and forward to the Administrative Coordinator, Administration Unit

*Note – This application must be received by Council  
no later than 12 noon on the working day prior to the Council meeting*

Fax: 4225 9964

Email: [lwatkins@wollongong.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lwatkins@wollongong.nsw.gov.au);

Tel: 4227 7111

Postal Address:

Locked Bag 8821, Wollongong NSW 2500

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation: (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

CHOOSE FROM 1 OR 2 BELOW -

1 Address of a general nature (not a Business Paper Agenda Item): (Please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

OR

2 Business Paper Item to be addressed -

Council Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Agenda Item No: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

I am  For the recommendation in the report \_\_\_\_\_

I am  Against the recommendation in the report \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand and agree to abide by the conditions of the Public Access Forum Policy of Wollongong City Council, a copy of which has been given to me.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_



## SUMMARY SHEET

<b>RESPONSIBLE DIVISION</b>	Governance and Information
<b>DATE ADOPTED ON BEHALF OF COUNCIL</b>	29 October 2009
<b>DATE OF PREVIOUS ADOPTION(S)</b>	28 October 2008
<b>DATE FOR REVIEW</b>	July 2012