

Policy Title	Meeting Procedures
Council Resolution	Item 15 (30 July 2018)
Responsible Directorate	Corporate Governance
Due for Review	Two (2) years from Council resolution date
Strategic Plan Reference	<u>Leading our community</u> 4.1 Govern in an open and responsible manner in the best interests of the community. 4.1.2 Ensure Council is open and transparent in its communication and dealings with our communities. 4.2 Manage our resources to achieve community outcomes. 4.2.4 Maintain fair systems and processes that result in high levels of regulatory compliance in Council and the community.
ECM	Council Policy

PURPOSE

This policy sets out the rules and procedures for Council Meetings and Council Committee Meetings which apply in addition to the procedures prescribed in the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2015*.

SCOPE

This policy applies to Council Meetings and Council Committee Meetings.

It does not apply to any other meeting held by Council (including a meeting of a special committee), unless the body conducting the meeting has expressly resolved to adopt all or part of it.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Acts	<i>Local Government Act 1993 (LGA 1993)</i>
Regulations	<i>Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2015 (Regulations)</i>
Australian Standards	Not applicable

DEFINITIONS

Council Committee	a 'council committee' established under section 23 of the LGA 1993
Council Committee Meeting	a meeting of a Council Committee convened in accordance with regulation 5(1)
Council Meeting	(a) an ordinary meeting of Council convened in accordance with regulation 4(1)(a), (2), (3) or (5), other than Council's annual general meeting, or (b) a special meeting of Council convened in accordance with regulation 4(1)(b) or (6)
General Manager	the General Manager of Council appointed under the LGA 1993, or delegate
In addition to the above, in this policy, a reference to: (a) a 'regulation' is to a provision in the Regulations, and (b) a 'Meeting' is to a Council Meeting and a Council Committee Meeting.	

MEETING PROCEDURES

Regulation 37(1) (Other procedures) permits Council to determine “any other procedures relating to meetings it considers appropriate”. Council has adopted the following additional meeting procedures under regulation 37(1).

Times of Meetings

Council’s preferred practice is that Meetings are to commence at 6:00 pm on the advertised day¹.

A Meeting Dates and Times Schedule (**Schedule**) will be adopted by Council late in each calendar year for all Meetings to be held in the following calendar year. In accordance with regulation 6(2), a decision to adopt a Schedule that provides for Meetings to commence prior to 5:00 p.m. must be by an absolute majority of Council.

If a Schedule is not adopted by an absolute majority, Meetings will commence at 5:00 p.m. in accordance with regulation 6(1).

A copy of the most recently adopted Schedule is to be published on Council’s website.

Abandoned Council Committee Meetings

Regulation 12(2) (Abandoned meetings) is apply to Council Committee Meetings in addition to Council Meetings.

For the purpose of this policy, to the extent that the relevant meeting is a Council Committee Meeting, the references in regulation 12(2) to ‘council meeting’ and ‘general manager’ are to be read as if they were references to ‘Council Committee Meeting’ and ‘Chairperson’, respectively.

If a Council Committee Meeting is abandoned, all items that cannot be dealt with under powers delegated to Council officers are to be deferred to the next meeting of that Council Committee.

Invitations to Address a Council Meeting

In accordance with Regulation 38(2) (Invitations to address meeting), the following conditions will apply to any invitation to a person to address a Meeting²:

1. a person wishing to address a Meeting must submit a request to the General Manager in accordance with the procedure published on Council’s website (see below for further information)
2. the Chairperson of the Meeting may, in their absolute discretion, refuse the request if, in the Chairperson’s opinion:
 - (a) the proposed topic of the address is frivolous, vexatious or is not related to a function or activity of Council or the relevant Council Committee (as applicable)
 - (b) the address is likely to be inflammatory, abusive, defamatory, or contain a personal attack against any person, or
 - (c) there is any other reasonable reason for refusing the request.
3. the following time limits apply to an address made to a meeting:
 - (a) for a Council Meeting, 15 minutes (unless Council resolves to extend the time limit), and

¹ Council meeting, 26 February 2018, item 12

² Invitations to address Council meetings were called ‘Deputations’ in earlier versions of the Regulations and this policy.

- (b) for a Council Committee Meeting, a time limit set at the discretion of the Chairperson.
4. the Chairperson may direct a person to immediately cease their address if the person breaches any condition imposed by the Chairperson or any other rules of the meeting.

The Chairperson may impose any other reasonable conditions on any invitation to address a Meeting, in addition to the conditions set out above.

Council is to publish any additional rules and procedures relating to invitations to address a meeting, including the process for requesting an invitation, on Council's website (www.gcc.tas.gov.au).

Voting Procedure

In accordance with regulation 27(2) (Voting procedure), a vote at a Meeting will be taken as follows:

1. the Chairperson will ask all those in favour of the motion to indicate their affirmative vote
2. the Chairperson will call out the names of all Aldermen voting in favour of the motion
3. the Chairperson will ask all those against the motion to indicate their negative vote
4. the Chairperson will call out the names of all Aldermen voting against the motion, and
5. if necessary, the Chairperson will call out the name of any Alderman who has abstained from the vote.

The name of any Alderman who abstains from a vote is to be recorded in the minutes as having voted in the negative³ with the word 'abstain' in brackets after their name.

Questions on Notice from Aldermen

In relation to Regulation 30 (Questions on notice), the following additional procedures apply:

1. an answer to a question on notice may be provided in the Agenda for the Meeting, or alternatively may be tabled at the Meeting with separate copies provided to all Aldermen
2. all answers (whether tabled or otherwise) are to be recorded in the Minutes, and
3. the Chairperson must not permit any debate about a question on notice or the answer provided to, but may permit discussion for a maximum of 3 minutes, and only for the purpose of clarification of the question or the answer.

Questions on Notice from the Public

The following additional rules apply to a question submitted by a member of the public to be asked at a Council Meeting under regulation 31(1) (Public question time):

1. questions must not be inflammatory or abuse or has the potential to defame a person
2. questions are to be put succinctly and in the form of a question, not a comment, and
3. the Chair may refuse to answer a question for any reason that the Chair considers reasonable in the circumstances, however must give reasons for doing so.

Council is to publish information relating to submitting questions on notice by the public, including any additional rules and procedures, on Council's website.

³ as required under regulation 28(3)

Public Question Time

In accordance with regulation 31(2) and (3) (Public question time), Council will allocate 15 minutes during each Council Meeting to invite members of the public to ask questions relating to the activities of Council (**Public Question Time**).

The following rules and procedures apply to Public Question Time⁴:

1. questions must relate to the activities of Council
2. members of the public are to announce their name and residential address before asking a question (which will be recorded in the minutes)
3. questions are to be put succinctly and in the form of a question, not a comment
4. questions must not be inflammatory, abusive, defamatory, contain a personal attack or otherwise breach any rules of the meeting which have been explained by the Chairperson
5. the Chairperson may limit the number of questions asked by each member of the public in order to ensure that all members of the public wishing to ask questions are given the opportunity within the allocated time
6. the Chairperson will decide the order in which questions are to be asked and may rotate the order between different members of the public if individuals have more than one question to ask
7. the Chairperson may, in their absolute discretion:
 - (a) refuse to answer a question if the Chairperson deems that it is inappropriate or does not comply with these rules or the rules of the Council Meeting, or
 - (b) take a question 'on notice', in which case the answer will be provided in writing prior the next Council Meeting and included on the agenda for the next Council Meeting
8. if a question is taken on notice, the Chairperson may request that the member of the public submit their question in writing and may refuse to provide a response if the question is not provided as requested, and
9. the 15 minutes allocated for Public Question Time may be extended at the discretion of the Chairperson at the conclusion of the time period.

Council is to publish information relating to Public Question Time, including any additional rules and procedures, on Council's website.

Petitions

In addition to the requirement to provide a copy of a petition to the General Manager in regulation 58(1)(b), an Alderman presented with a petition under regulation 57 is to notify the General Manager of the receipt of the petition and its subject matter email as soon as practicable after receiving it.

Council is to publish further information relating to tabling petitions, including any additional rules and procedures, on Council's website⁵.

⁴ Regulation 31(7) permits Council to determine any other procedures to be followed in respect of Public Question Time.

⁵ The rules that regulate the lodgement and tabling of Petitions are set out in Part 6, Division 1 of the LGA 1993.

Audio Recording of Meetings

Council's policies and procedures relating to the audio recording of Meetings are set out in Council's [Audio Recording of Meetings of Council Policy](#) (adopted on 26 October 2015, Item 17).

A copy of the policy is available on Council's website.

ORDER OF BUSINESS AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Format of Agenda

The agenda for a Council Meeting is to provide for a session which is open to members of the public under regulation 14 (**Open Session**), followed by a session which is closed to members of the public, during which matters listed in regulation 15(2) are discussed (**Closed Session**).

The agenda is to provide for the following items of business to be dealt with at the Council Meeting in the following order (which may be varied during the Meeting in accordance with the Regulations):

Agenda Item	Applicable Regulation/s
1. Open Session	
Welcome and preliminary matters (see below)	n/a
Apologies	8(2)(a)
Confirmation of minutes of previous Open Session	8(2)(b), 36
Announcements by the chair	n/a
Declarations of pecuniary interests	8(7)
Responses to previous public questions taken on notice	n/a
Public question time	8(2)(f), 31
Petitions, invitations to address meeting	s. 58, LGA 1993 (Petitions) 21 (Invitations)
Reports to be received (grouped by Directorate)	8(2)(g)
Notices of motion, questions on notice / without notice	8(h), 16, 29, 30
2. Closed Session	
Confirmation of Minutes of previous Closed Session	8(2)(b), 15, 34(6), 36
Applications for leave of absence	39
Reports to be received	8(2)(g)
Notices of motion, questions on notice / without notice	8(h), 16, 29, 30

Welcome and Preliminary Matters

The Chairperson of a Council Meeting may deal with the following preliminary matters at the commencement of the Council Meeting:

1. the Chairperson should officially open the meeting and welcome members of the gallery and any official visitors that have been invited to speak

2. the Chairperson may invite a person to conduct a ceremonial opening of meeting that the Chairperson considers is appropriate
3. the Chairperson may give an Acknowledgement of Country. An example of the Acknowledgement of Country that may be given is as follows:

"I acknowledge and pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as the traditional and original owners, and continuing custodians of this land on which we gather today and acknowledge and pay respect to Elders, past and present."

4. the Chairperson will may read information statements relating to rules, procedures or conduct at the Council Meeting which may include (but are not limited to), statements about:
 - (a) the audio recording of the Council Meeting and Council's policy, and
 - (b) workplace health and safety at the Council Meetings, including basic rules of conduct for attendees of the meeting.

Additional matters to be included in minutes

In addition to the matters prescribed in regulation 32, the minutes of a Council Meeting are to record the following:

- the attendance of any Council officers who are present in their capacity as employees
- the attendance of any official visitors, and
- particulars of any Council workshops that have been held since the last Council Meeting.

TABLING OF MATERIAL AT MEETINGS

On occasion, it may be necessary for a person to table material at a Meeting.

The Chairperson of a Council or Council Committee meeting may permit the tabling of material at the meeting provided that:

- the Chairperson is satisfied that the tabling of the material would contribute to the decision making process
- the items to be tabled have been inspected by responsible Council Officers prior to being brought into the Meeting room and show no obvious signs that they may cause harm to those present
- small items, other than documents, are enclosed in sealed, transparent, plastic bags
- large or heavy items are displayed so that they are visible to Alderman (or other members of the Meeting) and accessible for closer inspection if desired.

Council is to make surgical gloves and dust masks available for use by Aldermen, Council Officers or members of the public if they wish to use them when handling tabled material.

The Chairperson may, at their discretion, refuse to permit an item to be tabled at a meeting if they form the reasonable view that there is any risk to the health or safety of any person attending the Meeting, or there is some other reason (in the reasonably held opinion of the Chairperson) that the item should not be tabled.

BACKGROUND

The Regulations set out the rules and procedures that apply to Council Meetings and Council Committee Meetings. Regulation 37 of the Regulations provides that Council may determine any other procedures relating to meetings it considers appropriate.

Council has adopted this Policy to further ensure that Meetings are conducted in a way that is open, transparent, convenient, accessible and safe, and takes into account the requirements of Council and the Glenorchy community.