



PUBLIC QUESTION TIME PROCEDURE

GDS Category: Governance

Public Document? **YES**

Date: March 2010

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Version: 2

Review Date: March 2012

1. ACTIVITY DEFINITION

Whyalla City Council is committed to providing an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions at Ordinary Meetings as set out in its Council and Committee Meeting Procedures Policy.

2. RISK ASSESSMENT

Occupational Health and Safety Requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Refer to attached risk assessment</i>
Environmental Considerations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Refer to attached risk assessment</i>
Financial Implications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Refer to attached risk assessment</i>
Legal Requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Refer to attached risk assessment</i>
Service Provisions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Refer to attached risk assessment</i>
Information Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Refer to attached risk assessment</i>

3. WORK PERMIT / OTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED?

Public questions to an Ordinary Meeting of the Council are to be set out on the required 'Public Question Time' application template.

4. DOCUMENTATION

Local Government (Procedure at Meetings) Regulations 2000
Whyalla City Council's 'Council and Committee Meeting Procedures Policy'

5. TRAINING / COMPETENCIES REQUIRED

Familiarity with this procedure and the relevant 'Public Question Time' application template is required.

6. EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS THAT MAY BE USED

The relevant 'Public Question Time' application template (Attachment A).



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7. WORK METHOD REQUIREMENTS

- 7.1 During each Ordinary Meeting evening, the Council will allocate a time, as listed in the Council Agenda, for Public Question Time. The length of time allocated to Public Question Time is fifteen (15) minutes and three (3) minutes per speaker is applied or longer per questioner at the discretion of the Mayor, if there are only a few, brief public questions. At the conclusion of Public Question Time, the Ordinary Meeting will resume.
- 7.2 Persons submitting questions must be present in the public gallery and must stand when the Mayor reads their name and question.
- 7.3 In signing the Question Time application template, a person agrees to recognise the Mayor has discretion to terminate both question and response at any time, and acknowledges Council's right to enforce Section 30 of the Local Government (Procedure at Meetings) Regulations 2000.
- 7.4 The Mayor will have discretion to not accept a particular question. Questions are restricted to matters relating to Council reports, policy or operations and those of a personal nature will not be accepted. It is at the Mayor's discretion whether those questions are:
- a) answered by an immediate response at the meeting where it is asked and minuted;
 - b) to be answered in writing to the questioner by an officer in accord with Council's Customer Service Charter;
 - c) answered at the next or a subsequent Council meeting with a written response included in that meeting's Information Bulletin; or
 - d) not be replied to for reasons of confidentiality or being vexatious, time wasting, trivial, irrelevant or of a personal nature.
- 7.5 Questions submitted on the Question Time application template (refer below) will be accepted up to 9.30 am on the day of the Ordinary Meeting at the Mayor's discretion.

Questions from the floor, at the time of the meeting will also be accepted at the Mayor's discretion.

Questions submitted to Council on the Question Time application template will be given preference over those questions received from the floor at the time of the meeting.

Questions received by Council on the Public Question Time template after the 9.30 am deadline time will be submitted to the following Ordinary Meeting, or alternatively may be responded to in writing.



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- 7.6 Questions relating to the same issue will be grouped together and one response provided to that group of questions. Council will then proceed to the next subject.
- 7.7 The Mayor will take advice from the Chief Executive Officer on any matter deemed confidential under the Local Government Act 1999, Section 90, and under these circumstances, no response to the question will be provided.
- 7.8 The Mayor will chair and determine who shall answer each question and whether an immediate response or a written response either to an individual or a future Council meeting is more appropriate.
- 7.9 All questions and answers must be as brief as possible and the Mayor as Chair will determine when sufficient response to a question has been provided. The Mayor or Chair may indicate a maximum time for each question, having regard to the number of questions to be answered during the allotted time and complexity of the issue.
- 7.10 No discussion on the questions and answers will be permitted.
- 7.11 A list of questions and responses made at the meeting at which they are asked will be recorded in Council's Minutes which will be available from the Customer Service Centre of the Civic Building, the Internet or Council noticeboard at Westland Shopping Centre within one week of the Ordinary Meeting at which the questions were heard.
- 7.12 If there is insufficient time to verbally respond to a question or if a more detailed response is required than time allows, at the Mayor's discretion, a written response will be provided to the questioner within five working days and/or to a future Council meeting Agenda.
- 7.13 Limited privilege: Questions and Councillors should be aware that the protection of Parliamentary privilege does not apply to Local Government, and any statements or discussion in the Council Chamber or any documents produced are subject to the laws of defamation.
- 7.14 Council has discretion, taking into account the volume of requests, to assist customers, particularly those with disabilities or from a non-English speaking culture, by typing questions, that may then be read either by the questioner or the Mayor/Chair.
- 7.15 Return the completed 'Public Question Time' application template (either by mail or in person) to the Executive Officer, Whyalla City Council, PO Box 126, Whyalla SA 5600.



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8. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The annual Governance self-assessment audit shall review whether the practice of Public Question Time at Council meetings is in accordance with this procedure.

9. PROCEDURE OWNER

Manager Governance and Organisation Development

10. AUTHORITY

Adoption by Council at its meeting held 15 March 2010

11. HISTORY

Inaugural procedure created in conjunction with review of the 'Council and Committee Meeting Procedures Policy' (Council meeting held 27 January 2010)



WHYALLA CITY COUNCIL

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME
APPLICATION TEMPLATE**

NAME:

(Please Print)

ADDRESS:

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QUESTION:

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I hereby agree to abide by the Question Time Protocol (as detailed over page). I understand that the Mayor has discretion to terminate both question and response at any time, and to refer a question for submission as an Action Request, if necessary.

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Signature

.....

Date

Please return form (either by mail or in person) to:
 Executive Officer
 Whyalla City Council
 PO Box 126
 WHYALLA SA 5600