

# Questions to Council Form



**Please refer to the procedural guidelines within this form for further information on submitting questions for Council Meetings.**

**Please provide your:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Contact details:**

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

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

You may submit one question at any Scheduled Council Meeting. Multi-part questions will not be permitted.

Questions must be received no later than 12 noon on the day prior to the Council Meeting. Questions received later than 12 noon the day will be held over to the next scheduled Council meeting.

Does your question relate to a matter listed on the agenda?      **Yes**  (Item No. \_\_\_\_\_)      **No**

Do you intend to attend the Council Meeting?      **Yes**       **No**

**Question** (maximum 200 words, please note anything beyond 200 words will not be considered)

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**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

### Privacy Notification Statement

Council is collecting your name and address to be able to provide you with a written response to your question. If you do not provide this information, Council will be unable to provide you with a written response. Your telephone number/email address are optional and may assist Council in seeking clarification from you on the information you are seeking. You may access or correct your personal information by contacting Council. Only your name and suburb will appear in the Council minutes along with details of your question and Council's response. The other personal information on the form will only be disclosed to Administrators and Council Officers and will be retained on Council files until destroyed in accordance with the *Public Records Act 1973*.

If you have any queries, please contact the Governance Team on 9217 2170.

These Procedural Guidelines provide guidance to members of the public wishing to submit a question/statement to a Scheduled Council Meeting and contain procedures for administering Rule 48 of Council's Governance Rules relating to Public Question Time.

## **Purpose of Public Question Time**

The purpose of Public Question Time is to facilitate the asking and answering of questions by members of the public at Scheduled Council Meetings. Priority will be given to questions that relate to matters listed in the agenda (including speaking to a Petition or Joint Letter).

If you wish to submit a question you are encouraged to submit it prior to 12 noon on the day prior to a Scheduled Council Meeting. This gives Council the opportunity to properly investigate the question and provide a meaningful response at the meeting.

Questions can be submitted via email ([civic.administration@whittlesea.vic.gov.au](mailto:civic.administration@whittlesea.vic.gov.au)), delivery to the Council Offices, Customer Service desk or via mail (Locked Bag 1, Bundoora MDC VIC 3083).

The schedule of Council meeting dates and times is available on the City of Whittlesea website - <https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/about-us/council/council-meetings/>

## **Questions preferably in writing**

If you would like to ask a question at a Scheduled Council Meeting, your question should be in writing and in English unless this unreasonably prevents or hinders you from participating.

If you are unable to provide your question in writing and/or in English and would like to make alternate arrangements, please contact Council's Governance Team on 9217 2170 before the Council Meeting to discuss how you can submit your question to the Council Meeting.

If you do not speak English, we offer various language services to help you communicate with us including VITS and LanguageLinks. If you have a hearing or speech impairment you may use the National Relay Service.

We recommend that your question is submitted on the form available on our website <https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/about-us/council/council-meetings/>

## **Disallowed questions**

Prior to the Council meeting the CEO, may disallow a question on the grounds outlined below. When disallowing a question, the CEO may receive advice from Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO in relation to potential grounds for disallowing the question.

A question may be disallowed by the Chairperson if they determine that it:

- relates to a matter outside the duties, functions and powers of Council;
- is defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance;
- deals with a subject matter already answered;
- is aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or a member of Council staff;
- is directed at an individual Councillor or a member of Council staff;
- relates to personnel matters;
- relates to the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer;
- relates to industrial matters;

- relates to contractual matters;
- relates to proposed developments;
- relates to legal advice;
- relates to matters affecting the security of Council property; or
- relates to any other matter which Council considers would prejudice Council or any person.
- All questions and answers must be as brief as possible, and no discussion may be allowed other than by Councillors for the purposes of clarification.
- Like questions may be grouped together and a single answer provided at the Council meeting.
- The Chief Executive Officer will respond to questions submitted in accordance with Rule 48.
- The question and answer provided to public questions will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and not responded to each individual member of the public.

The Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO, or their delegate, must advise the person who submitted the question that the question has been disallowed prior to the Scheduled Council Meeting, and the reason or reasons for the question being disallowed.

Where time permits and where appropriate, the Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO or their delegate may contact the person who submitted the question and work with them to revise their question to remove the ground or grounds for disallowing the question.

## **Reading out Questions**

A time is set aside for Public Questions during Scheduled Council Meetings. Questions/statements will be read by the Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO and a response provided by the CEO. A person may submit up to one (1) question (must not be a multi-part question) per Scheduled Council Meeting. If more than one question is submitted by a person, the first question submitted will be read.

## **Responding to Questions**

The CEO will respond to questions submitted. The question and answer provided to public questions will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and not responded to each individual member of the public.

You may view the response to your question/s by accessing the livestream of the Scheduled Council Meeting. Where possible, live streamed Council meetings are also closed captioned.

## **Reasonable Accommodations**

Council plays a pivotal role in ensuring our residents have confidence and feel supported to participate and engage within the community and with Council.

If you are unable to attend the Council meeting in person for any reason, including because of an 'attribute' as defined in the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (e.g. a disability) you may nominate a representative to attend on your behalf.

## **Alternative ways to contact Council**

There are many other ways that you can contact Council to ask a question, provide feedback, receive a service or obtain information. You can contact us by telephone, by visiting the Council offices, by sending a letter or an email or by speaking with one of our staff out in the community. Public Question Time at Scheduled Council Meetings is but one method that residents and ratepayers can use to formally contribute to public debate or seek to input to, and obtain feedback from Council.

You are also welcome to contact the Panel of Administrators by email at [panel@whittlesea.vic.gov.au](mailto:panel@whittlesea.vic.gov.au) or by telephone 9217 2500. The Administrators have been appointed to perform the roles, responsibilities and functions of a Councillor which includes representing residents and ratepayers of the City of Whittlesea and to make decisions on your behalf at Council meetings.