

QUESTIONS TO ADMINISTRATORS FORM

**REFER TO THE PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES ON THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON
SUBMITTING QUESTIONS AT COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Name:

Address:

Contact details:

Mobile:

Email:

You may submit one or two questions at any Meeting. If more than two questions are submitted, you will be required to nominate which two questions will be put to Council and the priority order.

Priority will be given to questions that relate to matters listed on the Agenda.

Does your question(s) relate to a matter listed on the Agenda? **Yes** (Item No. _____) **No**

Statements or opinions are not permitted during question time.

Question One (maximum 200 words)

Question Two (maximum 200 words)

If you have any queries, please contact the Governance Team on 9217 2294.

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 will appear in the Council minutes along with details of your question(s) 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*.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

These Procedural Guidelines provide guidance to members of the public wishing to submit a question to a scheduled Council meeting and contain procedures for administering Rule 17 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 up to three hours prior to the advertised commencement time of 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 (info@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 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 the Council's Governance Team on 9217 2294 before the Council meeting to discuss the means by which you may 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/>) to ensure your record your contact details together with your question. Each question should be submitted on a separate form.

Disallowed questions

Prior to the Council meeting the CEO, in consultation with the Chairperson, may disallow a question on the grounds outlined below. When disallowing a question, the CEO may receive advice from Executive Manager Governance 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 malicious, defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance;
- deals with a subject matter already answered;
- is aimed at embarrassing an Administrator/Councillor or a member of Council staff;
- may lead to a breach of Council's requirement to comply with its statutory obligations; or
- deals with a matter that should be or has been considered as a confidential matter.

The Executive Manager Governance, 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 Governance 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.

Notification of Questions Received

The CEO must notify the Panel of Administrators of any public questions received prior to the scheduled Council meeting, including any questions which are disallowed.

The Chairperson will advise the meeting of a question received that has been disallowed and will provide reasons to the meeting as to why it has been disallowed. Statements and opinions are not permitted during question time and will not be read at the meeting.

Where a question relates to a matter to be dealt with in the confidential section of the Agenda or is of a nature that would ordinarily be dealt with in the confidential section of the Agenda, the Chairperson may, without reading the question aloud, advise the person submitting the question that the question will not be dealt with during the meeting and a written response will be provided as soon as is practicable.

Reading out Questions

A time is set aside for Questions to Administrators during scheduled meetings of Council when you will be given an opportunity to read out your question. A person may submit one or two questions at any Meeting. If more than two questions are submitted by a person, they will be required to nominate which two questions will be put to Council.

Each person will be allocated up to 2 minutes in total (not per question) if they wish to address Council in relation to their questions. A person who may need additional support in presenting to Council due to an impairment or disability, will be afforded reasonable accommodations to do so.

Responding to Questions

The Chairperson may nominate an Administrator/Councillor or the Chief Executive Officer to respond to a question. Prior to responding the Chairperson may seek contextual information from the person submitting the question.

The Chairperson or Chief Executive Officer to whom the question has been directed may require a question to be put on notice. If a question is put on notice, the answer to it must be recorded in the minutes of Council. A written copy of the answer must be sent to the person who asked the question within 14 days with copies to be provided to all Administrators/Councillors.

The answer given at the Council Meeting is an interim reply only and the Council's official response will be provided by either an Administrator or a Council Officer, on behalf of the Council, generally within 5 working days of the Council meeting. The response will be provided in writing or any other reasonable form determined by Council or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

If you are not in attendance, we will read out your question (or a summary of your question) and provide a response at the meeting and also record your question and the interim response in the minutes of the meeting subject to it complying with the Governance Rules and these Guidelines.

If you are not in attendance, you may view the response to your question/s by accessing the livestream of the 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.

Further information on additional support provided by Council can be obtained by referring to Council's '*Guide to Minimum Accessibility Requirements for Community Meetings, Consultations and Events*'. This Guide outlines the minimum accessibility requirements staff need to follow when facilitating or supporting community meetings including Council meetings to meet the needs of people with disabilities. (Please note that this guide is currently under production and will be published to Council's website when available.)

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, 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. Questions to Administrators 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 via 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.