

# Questions to Administrators Form



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

Please provide your:

Name:

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Address:

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Contact details:

Mobile:

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Email:

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You may submit one question/statement at any Scheduled Council Meeting. If more than one question/statement is submitted, Council will read your first question submitted. Multi-part questions will not be permitted.

Questions/statements must be received no later than 5pm the day prior to the Council Meeting. Questions/statements received later than 5pm the day prior will receive a written response following the 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 5.1 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 5pm 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, 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 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:

- is discourteous or disrespectful of the Council and its processes, or
- debates or joins Council discussions unless responding to a direct question from an Administrator; or
- asks a question that may (or is intended to) prejudice, insult, or defame someone.

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.

## Notification of Questions Received

The CEO must notify the Council of any public questions received prior to the Scheduled Council Meeting, including any questions which are disallowed.

Where a question relates to a matter to be dealt with in the confidential part of the meeting or is of a nature that would ordinarily be dealt with in the confidential meeting, the Chairperson may, without reading the question aloud, advise the person submitting the question that the question will be dealt with during the confidential meeting and a written response will be provided within 14 days.

## Reading out Questions

A time is set aside for Public Questions during Scheduled Council Meetings. Questions/statements will be read by the Chairperson and a response provided by the CEO. A person may submit up to one (1) 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 Chairperson may nominate an Administrator/Councillor or the CEO to respond to a question/statement. Prior to responding, the Chairperson may seek contextual information from the person submitting the question/statement.

Where the respondent is unable to answer the question during Public Question Time, they may put the question on notice and the resident will be provided with a written response within five business days, with copies also provided to all Administrators/Councillors.

The answer given at the Scheduled 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 five business days of the Council Meeting. The response will be provided in writing, or any other reasonable form determined by Council or the CEO.

The Chairperson will read out your question (or a summary of your question) and a response will be provided at the meeting and also recorded in the minutes of the meeting subject to it complying with the Governance Rules and these Guidelines.

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.