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## 1. Statement

This policy applies to residents and ratepayers of the City of Ipswich and aims to provide a welcoming, respectful and safe environment to present directly to Councillors, in a public forum, their views and issues on council strategic and policy issues that are important to them.

## 2. Purpose and Principles

The purpose of this policy is to provide an overview of the ways in which community members can raise issues of local government strategy and policy with Council at its meetings and the process for making a formal application.

### 1. Strategic Plan Links

This policy relates to:

- Caring for the Community
- Listening, Leading and Financial Management

### 2. Regulatory Authority

*Local Government Act 2009*

*Local Government Regulation 2012*

Meetings Procedures Policy

## 3. Scope

Public Participation only applies to Ordinary meetings of Council. Public Participation will not be conducted at Council's Standing Committees or Special meetings.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer, Mayor, Committee Manager and their teams are responsible for the performance of this policy.

## 5. Key Stakeholders

The following will be consulted during the review process:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Mayor
- Committee Manager

## 6. Objective

As part of Council's ongoing commitment to transparency and community engagement, a Public Participation session will be available at each Ordinary meeting of Council (dates and times are available on Council's website [www.ipswich.qld.gov.au](http://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au)).

The purpose of this is to allow members of the community to raise issues relating to council's strategies and policies. Specifically, matters raised must relate to council's strategies, functions, policies, budget and/or resources allocated towards achievement of one or more strategies defined in the *Advance Ipswich* community plan, or querying whether there are different/new strategies that should be pursued by the council.

This is not a forum to raise detailed council operational or site-specific concerns. Council provides members of the *public* with many avenues through which to engage with Council. These include, but are not limited to:

- Face to face contact through the Customer Service Centres;
- Phone calls through the Customer Call Centre and After Hours services;
- Email to Council's corporate email address [council@ipswich.qld.gov.au](mailto:council@ipswich.qld.gov.au)
- Letters;
- Council's website [www.ipswich.qld.gov.au](http://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au)
- Online services;
- Social media;
- Membership to community reference groups;
- Individual meetings arranged with the Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer or Council officers.

Public Participation at Ordinary Council Meetings is not intended to replace these existing engagement mechanisms which are a very effective way of interacting with Council.

Residents and ratepayers who make application to participate in Ordinary Council Meetings should be aware that the protection of Parliamentary privilege does not extend to local government. Any statements or discussion made during any Meeting of Council including any documents produced or submitted are subject to relevant laws including (but not limited to) the Privacy Act 2009 and the Defamation Act 2005.

## 7. Guidelines

Public Participation will be conducted in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. All statements (and associated background information) to be read at a meeting must be:
  - 1.1. submitted in writing using the relevant application form available on Council's website and from Council customer service locations;
  - 1.2. received by 4.30pm, three (3) business days prior to the Ordinary meeting. Applications can be lodged via email to [councilmeetings@ipswich.qld.gov.au](mailto:councilmeetings@ipswich.qld.gov.au) post to PO Box 191, Ipswich Qld 4305 or delivered in person to the public counter on the ground floor of

the Council Administration Building at 50 South Street, Ipswich. If posting, the applicant needs to allow sufficient time for their application to be received by Council, before the stipulated close off time.

**NOTE: Hand delivered applications will only be accepted at Council's 50 South Street, Ipswich office to ensure that the documents are received by the close off time.**

2. A maximum of two matters may be raised per person at each meeting.
3. A total of 15 minutes will be allocated at each Ordinary meeting for members of our community to raise issues or make suggestions to Council. The matter does not need to be on the agenda for that meeting. Should the 15 minute time limit be reached the chairperson may:
  - 3.1. grant an extension of time of not greater than a further five (5) minutes; or
  - 3.2. refer the remaining matters to be heard at the following Ordinary meeting.
4. The Chairperson will determine when a sufficient response to an enquiry has been provided and may finalise an address where:
  - 4.1 the time period allowed has expired;
  - 4.2 a person uses insulting or offensive language or is derogatory towards Councillors or staff members; or
  - 4.3 a person other than the appointed speaker interjects or attempts to address the Council.
  - 4.4 in the opinion of the Chairperson, the matter has reached a conclusion or is exhausted.
5. Public Participation at Ordinary Council Meetings is not a forum for debate or making allegations or derogatory remarks about Councillors or Council staff and is not to be used as a substitute for the formal complaint processes that Council has in place.
6. Matters may only be submitted by Ipswich residents and ratepayers aged 18 years and over. As part of the application process, Council may ask for evidence of identity.
7. Any matter presented or position taken (if related to a matter on the agenda) along with any associated background information must be clear and unambiguous and not contain argument on the subject.
8. Where a person is speaking for or against a matter before council, a strict time limit of 2 minutes will apply and no extension will be granted.
9. Where a person is speaking for or against a matter before council, preference will be given to applicants that are speaking to the opposing side of the position of another applicant.
10. No more than two (2) applicants may speak in any given meeting for or against the same matter.

11. Applicants that have spoken to a matter before council previously will not be permitted to speak again on the same or similar matter unless significant new information has come to the fore. The Chairperson, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer will determine if the new information is relevant and warrants an additional hearing.
12. The Chairperson, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, may disallow a matter to be raised which:
  - 12.1. is outside the duties, functions and powers of Council;
  - 12.2. is defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance;
  - 12.3. deals with a subject matter already answered (at the same or any earlier meeting);
  - 12.4. relates to personnel matters;
  - 12.5. relates to a development application that is currently being considered by council;
  - 12.6. relates to a personal matter that is not applicable to the broader community;
  - 12.7. relates to contractual matters that are commercial in confidence;
  - 12.8. relates to legal advice or matters currently before a Court for resolution;
  - 12.9. relates to matters currently subject to an independent investigation, administrative action complaint or appeal process;
  - 12.10. relates to a matter that due to resources and research implications will be better dealt with through the Right to Information processes;
  - 12.11. relates to the personal affairs or actions of Councillors or Council staff;
  - 12.12. is aimed or intended to embarrass Councillors or Council staff;
  - 12.13. relates to any other matter which Council considers would prejudice Council or any person.
13. Advice will be provided to the applicant prior to the meeting on whether the matter proposed to be raised meets the requirements of these guidelines. That determination is to be made by the meeting Chairperson.
14. The applicant (or their proxy) must be present at the meeting to raise the matter or speak for or against an item on the agenda in person and shall follow the direction of the Chairperson.
15. The Chairperson will call each person to come forward and state their name, raise their issue or read their statement. Each person will be allocated 2 minutes. Any questions are to be directed through the Chairperson.

16. A summary of the matter raised or position taken by the applicant along with any submitted background material and the name of the person speaking will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
17. No debate or discussion is permitted on any matter raised or statement read.
18. The Public Participation session will be live streamed and video recorded along with the rest of the Ordinary Meeting.
19. A summary of the responses to matters raised (if required) at the meeting will be recorded in the meeting minutes.

#### **10. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The effectiveness of this policy will be demonstrated by broad community participation in the Public Participation at Ordinary Council Meetings session with community members using this platform to be involved in the growth of a Council that thrives on diversity of ideas.

Council is committed to talking with and listening to our community. This platform provides Council with another mechanism to identify issues of importance to the city.

#### **11. Definitions**

- Ordinary Meeting of Council: This meeting is also referred to as “full council” meaning that all Councillors, including the Mayor, constitute the membership. It is at this meeting that formal adoption of all reports is undertaken.
- Special Meeting of Council: A special meeting of Council may be called to consider a specific item which requires an immediate decision, prior to the next round of Council meetings.
- Committee Meetings: Committee meetings support the Ordinary Meeting of Council process by considering matters that relate to specific portfolios eg Environment, Governance and Growth and Infrastructure. These meetings provide recommendations for adoption at the Ordinary Meeting of Council.

#### **12. Related Documents**



Public Participation  
Application Form.rtf