	GOVERNANCE POLICY PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	Policy Number Version Number Issued Last Review Next Review GDS	G1.33 3 December 2014 June 2023 June 2028 9.63.1.1
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PUBLIC QUESTION TIME POLICY

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to improve the openness, transparency and accountability of The Flinders Ranges Council (Council) by allowing the opportunity, during each Ordinary Meeting of Council for members of the public to ask a question of the Council and receive an appropriate response to that question.

2. Policy Scope

The Council will allocate fifteen minutes in the Council agenda for each monthly Ordinary meeting for the purpose of Public Question Time. Each member of the community wishing to pose a question of Council, must do so in writing prior to the meeting; they must be present at the relevant meeting; and they will be allowed to speak for no longer three (3) minutes at the meeting.


3. Related Documents

This Policy is intended to complement and be implemented in conjunction with other Council policies and resources, including:

- Customer Service Goals Policy
- Customer Complaints Policy
- Access to Council Meetings and Documents Policy
- Other Policies of Council that may be adopted from time-to-time.

4. Application to Participate in Public Question Time

- 4.1. Members of the public wishing to participate in the Public Question Time section of the monthly Ordinary Council Meeting are required to submit their question on the attached *Question Time Application Form* to be received by Council by no later than 9.00 am on the Monday the week prior to the Ordinary Meeting. Application Forms can be sent to Council either by mail (Chief Executive Officer, The Flinders Ranges Council, PO Box 43, Quorn SA 5433), email (council@frc.sa.gov.au) or in person. This form is available from www.frc.sa.gov.au or from the main administration office.
- 4.2. The Mayor will have discretion to accept or 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.
- 4.3. All questions accepted by the Mayor under section 4.2 above will be included on the agenda for the next Ordinary Council meeting together with the name of the person posing the question.
- 4.4. In signing the *Question Time Application Form*, 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 (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations 2013* (appended at end of this policy).

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5. At the Meeting

- 5.1. Persons submitting questions must be present in the public gallery and must stand, if able, when the Mayor reads their name and question.
- 5.2. 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.
- 5.3. 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;
 - (c) Answered at the next or subsequent Council meeting;
 - (d) Not be replied to for reasons of confidentiality or being vexatious, time wasting, trivial, irrelevant or of a personal nature.
- 5.4. The Mayor will take advice from the Chief Executive Officer on any matter deemed confidential under section 90 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, and under these circumstances, no response to the question will be provided.
- 5.5. No discussion on the questions and answers will be permitted.
- 5.6. 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 (5) working days and/or deferred to a future Council meeting agenda.
- 5.7. 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.
- 5.8. Questioners and Elected Members 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.

6. Recording of Responses

A list of questions asked and responses given at each Council meeting will be recorded in Council's Minutes.

Consultation: 16 December 2014 (Resolution: 240/2014)
Adopted: 17 February 2015 (Resolution: 059/2015)
Reviewed: 21 February 2017 (Resolution: 025/2017)
Reviewed: 20 June 2023 (Resolution 149/2023)

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Appendix:

Extract from REGULATIONS UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (PROCEDURES AT MEETINGS) REGULATIONS 2013

30—Interruption of meetings by others

A member of the public who is present at a meeting of a council or council committee must not—

- (a) behave in a disorderly manner; or
- (b) cause an interruption.

Maximum penalty: \$500



**The Flinders
Ranges Council**

THE FLINDERS RANGES 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.

.....
Signature

.....
Date

Please return form (either by mail or in person) to:

CEO
The Flinders Ranges Council
PO BOX 43
QUORN SA 5433
council@frc.sa.gov.au

Question Time Protocol

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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.

It is at the Mayor's discretion whether those questions are:

- Answered by an immediate response at the meeting where it is asked and minuted;
- To be answered in writing to the questioner by an Officer;
- Answered at the next or subsequent Council meeting;
- Not be replied to for reasons of confidentiality or being vexatious, time wasting, trivial, irrelevant or of a personal nature.

The Mayor will take advice from the Chief Executive Officer on any matter deemed confidential under section 90 of the *Local Government Act 1999*, and under these circumstances, no response to the question will be provided.

No discussion on the questions and answers will be permitted.

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 (5) working days and/or deferred to a future Council meeting agenda.

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.

Questioners and Elected Members 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.