

Public Question Time Policy

One of the ways the Council embraces the organisational value *We care about our community* is by inviting members of the public to ask questions about the activities of the Council during Public Question Time at ordinary Council Meetings. Respectful contributions from members of the public are welcome and appreciated.

Public Question Time is managed to these conditions:

- 15 minutes is available, as required, at each ordinary Council Meeting for Public Question Time.
- This time may be extended at the discretion of the Chairperson.
- Debate or discussion about questions or answers is not permitted.
- The Chairperson may refuse to accept a question. If this happens, reasons will be provided.
- **A limit of three questions per person applies per Meeting.**
- **Multiple-part questions framed in such a way as to circumvent the limit of three questions per person, will be treated as individual questions.**

In addition to the above, questions asked during Public Question Time may be asked with or without notice:

Questions on Notice

- Questions on Notice must be submitted at least seven days before the ordinary Council Meeting. The seven-day period does not include the day notice is given or the day of the ordinary Council Meeting.
- The questions and responses will usually be published in the Agenda of the next ordinary Council Meeting.
- If more time is needed to respond to complex questions, the questions will be acknowledged in the Agenda of the next ordinary Council Meeting, with the date of the later ordinary Council Meeting at which response/s will be published.
- If more than three questions per person are submitted, additional questions will be treated as correspondence and a written response will be provided in keeping with the Council's Customer Service Charter (05-Plx-008) and relevant communication protocols.
- Only questions will be published in the Agenda. Accompanying correspondence, statements or preamble will not be published.

Questions Without Notice

- Members of the public who attend an ordinary Council Meeting to ask Questions Without Notice will be invited to write their name and questions on arrival at the Council Chambers, to assist with minute-taking.
- The Chairperson will determine the order in which people will be invited to ask their questions.
- Questions must be succinct; Public Question Time is not an opportunity to make statements or engage in lengthy preamble.
- The Chairperson may require a person who asks a Question Without Notice to put their Question on Notice so it can be answered at a future ordinary Council Meeting.

- Questions asked during Public Question Time, and answers given, will be minuted with attribution to the person asking the question and to the person who answers the question.

Please note that Public Question Time is live-streamed and recorded. At the time of writing, the Council streams and records audio only but from time to time, the Chairperson may permit third parties to stream and record audio and video (for example, the media).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to contribute to the orderly preparation for and conduct of ordinary Council Meetings by stating the Council's position in relation to Public Question Time.

SCOPE

This policy applies to members of the public who wish to ask questions of the Council during Public Question Time at the City of Launceston's ordinary Council Meetings. This policy does not apply to members of the public who attend ordinary Council Meetings to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda.

PRINCIPLES



Our people matter



We care about our community



We bring an open mind



We go home safe and well

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

05-Plx-008 Customer Service Charter

RELATED LEGISLATION

Local Government Act 1993 (Tas)

Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2015

REFERENCES

Council Meeting Procedures - Information Sheet November 2018, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Office of Local Government, accessed 29 March 2022 at [Department of Premier and Cabinet \(dpac.tas.gov.au\)](http://dpac.tas.gov.au)

DEFINITIONS

Member of the public - residents and ratepayers from the Launceston Municipal Area

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed no more than four years after the date of approval (version) or more frequently, if dictated by operational demands and with Council's approval.