

# Public Question Time Guidelines

## 1. Policy – Governance Rules 2020

- 1.1. There must be a public question time at every Ordinary Council meeting to enable members of the public to submit questions to Council.
- 1.2. 1.1. does not apply during any period when a meeting is closed to members of the public in accordance with s.66(2) of the Act
- 1.3. The chair will allocate a maximum of five (5) minutes to each person who wishes to address Council.
- 1.4. Questions submitted to Council may be submitted in writing prior to a meeting or provided verbally as part of public question time during a Council meeting.
- 1.5. Questions submitted in advance of a Council meeting must be:
  - i. In writing, stating the name and address of the person submitting the question and generally be in a form approved or permitted by Council; and
  - ii. Hand delivered to Council on the day of the meeting prior to 12.00noon on the day of the Council meeting; or
  - iii. Be lodged electronically at the prescribed email address prior to 12.00noon on the day of the Council meeting.
- 1.6. No person may submit more than two (2) questions at any one meeting.
- 1.7. If a person has submitted two questions to a meeting, the second question:
  - i. May, at the discretion of the Chair, be deferred until all other persons have had their questions asked and answered; or
  - ii. May not be asked if the time allotted for public question time has expired.
- 1.8. The Chair or a member of Council staff nominated by the Chair may read to those present at the meeting a question which has been submitted in accordance with this rule.
- 1.9. Notwithstanding 1.8, the Chair may refrain from reading a question or having a question read if the person who submitted the question is not present in the gallery at the time when the question is due to be read.
- 1.10. A question may be disallowed by the Chair, if it is determined that it:
  - Relates to a matter outside the duties, functions and power of Council;
  - Is defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance;
  - Deals with a matter already answered;
  - Is aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or a member of Council staff;
  - Relates to personnel matters;
  - Relates to the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer;
  - Relates to industrial matters;
  - Relates to proposed developments;
  - Relates to legal advice;
  - Relates to matters affecting the security of Council property; or
  - Relates to any other matter which Council considers would prejudice Council or any person.
- 1.11. Any question which has been disallowed by the Chair must be made available to any other Councillor upon request.



- 1.12. All questions and answers must be as brief as possible and no discussion may be allowed other than by Councillors for the purposes of clarification.
- 1.13. Like questions may be grouped together and a single answer provided.
- 1.14. The Chair may nominate a Councillor, the Chief Executive Officer or a member of Council staff to respond to a question.
- 1.15. A Councillor, the Chief Executive Officer or member of Council staff may require a question to be put on notice. If a question is put on notice, a written copy of the answer will be sent to the person who asked the question.
- 1.16. Where a question is received on notice, Council officers will respond acknowledging the question and providing procedural advice and/or the response within ten (10) working days of the Council meeting.
- 1.17. A Councillor or the Chief Executive Officer may advise Council that it is his or her opinion that the reply to a question should be given in a meeting closed to members of the public. The Councillor or Chief Executive Officer (as the case may be) must briefly state the reason why the reply should be given and unless Council resolves to the contrary, the reply to such question must be given.

## 2. Procedure

### 2.1. Questions in Advance

- Submitted by Hand - A '**Questions in Advance**' form needs to be received by Council by **12.00noon** on the day of the Ordinary meeting; or
- Submitted Electronically - A '**Questions In Advance**' form needs to be received by **12.00noon** on the day of the Ordinary meeting, lodged electronically through Council's website [website](#) or by email to [eaceo@pyrenees.vic.gov.au](mailto:eaceo@pyrenees.vic.gov.au).

