

Participation in public question time at virtual council meetings

The purpose of public question time is to enable public participation in Council Meetings. This item gives any member of the public the opportunity to freely ask a question relating to any Council related matter.

If you have a question you would like to ask at an ordinary meeting of Council, it must be written and received by 10am on the day of the meeting.

Public question time is to allow for questions to be asked to the Council, it is not an opportunity to make statements or to present a case on a particular issue. You are asked to respect this when submitting your question.

What to do?

1. Ensure your question complies with [Section 19 of Local Law No. 2 of 2019](#).
2. Submit your question/s before 10am on the day of the meeting via any of these options:
 - Completing an [online](#) form (you will receive a copy of your completed form via email)
 - Printing/completing a downloadable [form](#) and submitting it:
 - by email to info@surfcoast.vic.gov.au;
 - by fax 03 5261 0525; or
 - by post to PO Box 350, Torquay, 3228.
3. Watch the meeting via [live streaming](#) on Council's website.

Due to COVID-19 and the meeting being held virtually, the Chief Executive Officer will read out your question/s and the Chair will answer or refer the matter to the Chief Executive Officer, a General Manager or a Councillor. An answer to your question/s will be given immediately if possible, or taken 'on notice' if an immediate answer is not available. (When a question is taken 'on notice', a reply will be provided within five business days).

A question will only be read to the meeting if the Chairperson has determined that the question:

1. Does not relate to a matter that is deemed confidential in accordance with the Local Government Act;
2. Does not relate to a matter in which Council has no power to act;
3. Is not defamatory, indecent, abusive or objectionable in language or substance;
4. Is not repetitive of a question already answered (whether at the same or an earlier meeting); and
5. Is not asked to embarrass a Councillor or council officer.

If the Chairperson has determined that the question shall not be read to the meeting:

1. He or she must advise the meeting accordingly; and
2. The question shall be available to Councillors upon request.

Surf Coast Shire Council considers that the responsible handling of personal information is a key aspect of democratic governance, and is strongly committed to protecting an individual's right to privacy. Council will comply with the Information Privacy Principles as set out in the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. The information will be used for the primary purpose it was collected or any related purpose for which the individual would reasonably expect Council to use or disclose the information. The information will not be disclosed to any other party unless Council is required to do so by law.