

Notes for persons intending to participate in Public Question Time

The purpose of this session is to enable public participation in Council Meetings.
Public question time gives any member of the public the opportunity to freely ask a question on any Council related matter.

Questions must be written and be received by 10am of the day of the meeting.

Questions can be submitted online or in hardcopy be emailed to info@surfcoast.vic.gov.au, faxed to 5261 0525 or hand delivered to Customer Service, Council Offices, 1 Merrijig Drive, Torquay.

Question time is specifically available for questions. It is not an opportunity to make statements or to present a case on a particular issue. You are asked to respect this and promptly direct your question to the Mayor.

Written questions, together with name, address and contact details should be tabled.

Asking the question is easy and members of the public are encouraged to ask any questions they have.

Question Time is limited to 30 minutes.

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

1. Does not relate to a matter of the type described in Section 89(2) of the Act (refer below).
2. Does not relate to a matter in respect of 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).
5. Is not asked to embarrass a Councillor or council officer.

If the Mayor or 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.

Answers to questions shall be given immediately, if possible, or taken 'on notice' if an on the spot answer is not available. (Where a question is taken 'on notice' a reply shall be mailed within five (5) business days).

What to do?

The Mayor/Chairperson shall formally invite questions from the public.

The member of the public then

- Stands up and moves to the table;
- States clearly his or her name, and
- Asks his or her question(s). (Please ask your question clearly and as briefly as possible);

The Mayor shall then answer questions or refer the matter to the Chief Executive, General Manager or a Councillor.

DEFINITIONS:

Section 89 Local Government Act:

(2) A Council or special committee may resolve that the meeting be closed to members of the public if the meeting is discussing any of the following:

- a) Personnel matters;
- b) The personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer;
- c) Industrial matters;
- d) Contractual matters;
- e) Proposed developments;
- f) Legal advice;
- g) Matters affecting the security of Council property;
- h) Any other matter which the Council or special committee considers would prejudice the Council or any person;
- i) A resolution to close the meeting to members of the public.

(3) If a Council or special committee resolves to close a meeting to members of the public the reason must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

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.