

# Guidelines for Agenda Public Questions Time at Council Meetings



**South Gippsland**  
Shire Council

*Public Question Time is conducted at a Council Meeting open to the public. It provides an opportunity for Council to respond to questions submitted by the public for the purpose of clarifying matters included in the meeting agenda. It does not replace direct contact with Councillors or Council's Customer Service.*

*This section of the Council Meeting agenda, is limited to a maximum duration of 15 minutes, unless Council revolves to extend the time.*

## When to submit an Agenda Public Question

Public Questions related to the Council meeting agenda must be submitted at least 24 hours prior to the date of the scheduled Council meeting.

Public Questions can be submitted electronically via Council's website or delivered in hard copy to Council's Main Office at 9 Smith Street, Leongatha.

## Requirements for an Agenda Public Question

A person may submit up to three (3) questions for each Council meeting about items related to the meeting agenda.

A valid question must:

- Be in writing (not pencil), typed or printed;
- Be clear and legible and not exceed 200 words, including any preamble and additional information;;
- Relate to an agenda item on the [Council Meeting agenda](#)
- State the name, address, email and contact details of the person submitting the question, for contacting by Council;
- Not name, allude to or focus on an individual;
- Not be more than two parts within a question;
- Be lodged 24 hours prior to the start time and date of the scheduled Council meeting;
- Relate to a matter within the duties, functions and powers of Council and not relate to operational matters;
- Not be defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant or objectionable in language or substance.

## Can a question be disallowed

Yes - any question disallowed will not be read out and recorded in the minutes. If a disallowed question relates to Council business it may be referred to as a customer request.

## Other conditions

Any question received within 24 hours prior to the commencement of a Council meeting will be held over to the agenda of the following month's Council meeting; or, where appropriate, responded to by officers as a general customer request in accordance with Council's Customer Service Charter (within 10 business days).

Refer to Council's Governance Rules available on the website for details on submitting questions at a Council meeting.

## Can a question be read out at a Council meeting

Yes - a person is to be present in the Council Chamber during Agenda Public Question Time, to read out their question and must not raise any additional questions or alter the previously submitted question(s) to Council. Someone else can not read out your question.

Only the question submitted in advance may be read out at the Council meeting. Questions and responses must be brief. No debate is permitted, except where a Councillor seeks clarification of the question.

*Please note: a person does not need to be present at a Council meeting in order to have their question and response read out and included in the minutes of the meeting.*

## How a question is considered by Council

Questions that have been received and accepted will be read out and responded to at a Council meeting.

All questions are directed through the *Chair* of the Council meeting and read out by either the *Chair* or delegated staff, or nominated Councillor, unless requested to be read out by the person who submitted the question.

The name of the person submitting the question, the question and the response are recorded in the minutes, as an official record of the question being dealt with at a Council meeting.

*In accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic), personal information provided as part of the question will only be used for the primary purpose for which it was provided – that is, for Council to consider the question.*

*No personal details other than the name of the person will be made public at the Council meeting or recorded in meeting documentation.*