

Guidelines for Petitions at Council Meetings



South Gippsland
Shire Council

Petitions may be hand delivered to a Councillor in person or by mail or delivery to Council's Main Office at 9 Smith Street, Leongatha and addressed to the Chief Executive Officer.

When to submit a petition

Petitions (or joint letters) must be submitted by 5:00PM, 14 ordinary days prior to a Council meeting to be included in the agenda.

Petitions (or joint letters) received after this timeframe will be presented at the next Council meeting, unless Council determines to treat it as urgent business.

Requirements for a petition

A valid petition must:

- Be in writing (not pencil), typed or printed;
- Contain the prayer (call to action) of the petition on each page containing a signature;
- Be signed by at least 10 people;
- A valid signature must clearly show the person's name and residential address, including; street name, town and postcode;
- Include a cover letter with the details of the lead petitioner's full name, address and contact details;
- Only be signed once by each individual;
- 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.

Other conditions

- Contact details of the lead petitioner is to be provided; otherwise, the first signature on the petition will be identified as the lead petitioner and Council's contact;
- Each page must be a single sheet and only attached to other pages of the same petition;
- In cases of sickness or incapacity, a petitioner may nominate another person to sign on their behalf;
- Any signature appearing on a page without the prayer will not be counted;
- Electronic or online petitions must include each petitioner's name and email address, which will count as their signature.

How a petition is considered by Council

Validity of a petition and signatures will be checked prior to being listed on the Council meeting agenda.

Acknowledgment of receiving a petition will be sent to the person lodging it, or to the first signatory.

Councillors and the Governance office will receive the full petition. Only the prayer is included in the Council meeting agenda and no personal information or signatures is made public.

At a Council meeting, Council may resolve to:

- Receive and note the petition (or joint letter);
- Request a report about the petition at a future meeting;
- Consider it at a specific time or in conjunction with a specific item;
- Consider it in conjunction with another agenda item at that Council meeting or any other Council meeting agenda;
- Refer the petition to the Chief Executive Officer for consideration, with the response reported to at a future meeting for finalisation.

Petitions related to a formal submission process (such as the Budget, planning applications, or planning scheme amendments) are handled by the relevant Department at Council and are not tabled at Council meetings. A written notice to the lead petitioner notifying them of this process will be sent prior to distributing the Council meeting agenda, in which it was requested to be tabled.

Petitions that do not conform to the requirements and conditions in these guidelines will not be considered by Council.

Refer to Council's Governance Rules on the website for details on submitting petitions (or joint letters) at a Council meeting.

In accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic), personal information provided as part of the petition will only be used for the primary purpose for which it was provided – that is, for Council to consider the matter. No personal details of signatories will be made public at the Council meeting or recorded in meeting documentation.