



Ward Consultation Forum Policy

Policy Owner	Governance & Corporate Accountability Corporate Services
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PURPOSE

This Policy provides a framework for the provision of Ward Consultation Forums to ensure they are conducted in an equitable and productive manner that benefits both the Councillors and the community.

SCOPE

This policy applies to Councillors wishing to hold Council supported meetings with constituents within their ward.

Ward Consultation Forums are not Council meetings and no official decisions can be made relating to a topic or matter to which they refer. Councillors must conduct themselves in a manner in accordance with the Councillor Code of Conduct.

The general intent of Ward Consultation Forums is to:

- Allow the democratically-elected Councillor(s) to engage with the community.
- Encourage community participation in their local Government.
- Allow Councillors to advise their constituents on policy development and strategic issues as well as Council-wide and local initiatives.
- Allow Councillors to discuss issues of local importance.
- Enable constituents to provide feedback to their Councillor(s) on a range of issues that interest them.

POLICY

1. Context

Local Government is the closest and most accessible sphere of government to the community. Ward Consultation Forums help to promote open communication and consultation with the community which assists to develop partnerships and build better relationships. Councillors benefit from their constituents having the opportunity to interact with their elected representatives and help shape the community in which they live. These Forums are listening posts designed to engage with various stakeholders within the municipality.

2. Role of the Councillor

Councillors are a primary interface between Council and the community. In the conduct of meetings, the Ward Councillor acts as:

- chairperson
- presenter

- facilitator; and
- mediator (if required).

It is the Councillor's decision as to the format, date and location of the Forum. Councillors may wish to hold Forums in shopping strips, local halls, markets or other venues. It is preferred that the venue is Council owned to avoid hall hire fees. Councillors should give officers at least one month's notice of their intention to hold a Ward Consultation Forum to ensure that all the necessary arrangements, including advertising, can be put into place.

The Councillor will need to set up the Forum and pick up the keys to the venue as required.

Councillors will provide a summary of the Ward Consultation Forum in the next available Councillor Delegate Report.

3. Officer Support

Officer support is provided to Councillors for their meetings regarding booking the venue and scheduling dates in the Councillors diary, advertising the meeting in advance in the local newspapers, local radio and on Council's website and social media pages where applicable.

Officers will book the Forum in a suitable Council owned venue. If there are no Council owned venues, then the Director Corporate Services can authorise the booking of a non-Council owned venue instead.

At the Councillors request, documentation, pamphlets and other information can be provided to the Councillor to take to the Forum. Officers will not provide any other support to Councillors or attend Forums.

4. Conditions and Limitations

A Ward Consultation Forum will not be called or held where it will clash with a scheduled Council meeting, Special meeting, Hearings Committee or Strategy Briefing.

To avoid/minimise potential politicisation of meetings with ward constituents, the following rules will apply:

- Ward Consultation Forums will not be held during the caretaker period.
- Ward Consultation Forums scheduled where a Federal or State Election is called may be cancelled/rescheduled where there is the ability to provide reasonable notice to the community.

DEFINITIONS

Caretaker Period:

A period determined by the State Government immediately prior to a Local Government Election where the current Council have restricted decision making powers.

Ward Constituents:

Community members associated with the Ward of the Councillor through residential, business, recreational or other community affiliation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Director Corporate Services

Communication

Governance and Corporate Accountability