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**GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

**Section 31 of the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2015***

Questions from the public may either be submitted to the General Manager in writing or asked verbally at an Ordinary Council meeting. Any question asked must only relate to the activities of Council [Section 31(2)(b)].

This guideline is provided to assist the public with the requirements of Public Question Time as set out in the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2015* as well as determinations made by Council. You are reminded that the public question forum is designed to accommodate questions only and neither the questions nor answers will be debated.

**Questions on Notice**

Written questions on notice must be received at least seven (7) days before an Ordinary Council meeting [Section 31(1)] and must be clearly headed ‘Question/s on Notice’. The period of 7 days includes Saturdays, Sundays and statutory holidays but does not include the day on which notice is given or the day of the Ordinary Council meeting [Section 31(8)].

**Questions Without Notice**

The Chairperson of an Ordinary Council meeting must ensure that, if required, at least 15 minutes is made available for public questions without notice [Section 31(3)]. A question without notice must not relate to any matter that is listed on the agenda for that meeting.

A question by any member of the public and an answer to that question is not to be debated at the meeting [Section 31(4)]. If a response to a question cannot be provided at the meeting, the question will be taken on notice and will be included in the following Ordinary Council meeting agenda, or as soon as practicable, together with the response to that question.

There is to be no discussion, preamble or embellishment of any question asked without notice, and the Chairperson may require that a member of the public immediately put the question.

The Chairperson can determine whether a question without notice will not be accepted but must provide reasons for refusing to accept the said question [Section 31 (6)]. The Chairperson may require a question without notice to be put on notice and in writing.

The Chairperson may rule a question inappropriate, and thus inadmissible if in his or her opinion it has already been asked, is unclear, irrelevant, offensive or relates to any matter which would normally be considered in Closed Session. The Chairperson may require that a member of the public immediately put the question.