



## PROTOCOLS PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – SHIRE OF ASHBURTON MEETINGS (Governance Policy ELM07)

This information is provided to assist members of the public attending Meetings.

### Important Points:

- The Public are most welcome at Shire of Ashburton Meetings. You are permitted to come and go from the meeting as you wish.
- The Local Government Act 1995 and Council Meeting Agenda specifically allow for “Question Time for the Public” (Committee Meeting’s with delegated authority also have a question time).
- Question Time will be held in accordance with the legislated period of up to 15 minutes. You may submit questions for consideration at any relevant Council/Committee Meeting. Public Question Time is declared closed following the expiration of the allocated 15 minute time period, or earlier if there are no further questions. The Council by resolution though, may extend public question time after the minimum time for questions has elapsed, if required.

### How to Submit a Public Question:

1. Public Questions are to be submitted on the **Public Question Form**.
2. You are entitled to ask up to three questions before other Members of the public will be invited to ask their questions.
3. If possible one Public Question Form per question / subject matter should be submitted.
4. If multiple pages are to be submitted, one Public Question Form should be attached to the front of the questions.
5. In order to have the most comprehensive answer provided, meeting attendees are encouraged to submit Public Question five working days prior to the Meeting by:
  - Email to [Public.Questions@ashburton.wa.gov.au](mailto:Public.Questions@ashburton.wa.gov.au)
  - Fax to the CEO on 9189 2252
  - Post to the CEO, Shire of Ashburton, PO Box 567 Tom Price WA 6751
  - Or via the website; [www.ashburton.wa.gov.au](http://www.ashburton.wa.gov.au)

Or alternatively you can submit your question by:

- Placing the Public Question Form in the Question Tray on the day of the Meeting, at least **15 minutes** prior to the commencement of the Meeting.

6. Public Question forms are available on the Shire website ([www.ashburton.wa.gov.au](http://www.ashburton.wa.gov.au)), and at the venue of the Council/Committee Meeting immediately prior to meetings.
7. To enable sufficient time for research, Public Questions (particularly complex questions requiring research) should be submitted at least 5 working days prior to the Council/Committee Meeting via email, mail, fax, Shire of Ashburton website or in person.
8. Members of the public are required to include their name, residential address and other contact details on the Public Question form. This information assists Administration with responding to Public Questions in a timely manner.
9. If the member of the public is unable to provide the question in writing, a Council employee will assist.

**Guidance for Members of Public during Public Question Time at Council Meeting:**

1. Members of the public will be invited to ask their question by the Chairperson, and are to follow directions in respect to time allocated. All questions are to be directed to the Presiding Member.
2. Any person asking a question will (if able) stand to give their name and read out the question and will be seated immediately on either the completion of the question or at the Chairperson's instruction.
3. Members of the public should not address elected members or officers individually unless invited to do so.
4. You are entitled to ask up to three questions before other members of the public will be invited to ask their questions. You shall have two minutes to submit a question.
5. The Chairperson may, at their discretion;
  - a. Nominate a Member of the Council or an Officer to answer the question.
  - b. Take a question on notice. In this case a written response will be provided as soon as possible and a summary of the response will be included in the agenda of the next appropriate meeting of the Council.
  - c. Take written questions as correspondence and arrange for them to be responded to as normal business correspondence.
  - d. Make a determination where there is concern about a question being offensive or defamatory, or where the person is making a statement (provided that all reasonable steps have been taken to phrase the matter into a reasonable question) that such questions will not be accepted or published.
  - e. Decide that a public question shall not be responded to where the same or similar question was asked at a previous meeting, and answered.
6. Public Question Time is available only for asking questions and not for making statements. Any preamble to enable an understanding of the question should be minimised.
7. Please note that no debate or discussion will be permitted on any question or answer.

8. Members of the public are requested to respect the rights of others to speak and should not ask questions of or interrupt any other person asking a question or making a presentation.
9. Where an answer to a question is given at a meeting, a summary of the question and the answer is included in the minutes.