

PARTICIPATING IN PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – COUNCIL MEETINGS

Questions for an Ordinary Meeting of Council may be submitted prior to the meeting via:

- **Email:** legal.pa@huonvalley.tas.gov.au
 - **Online:** through the Huon Valley Council [website](#)
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GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Question Limit:** 2 questions per person per meeting applies
- **Response provider:** relevant Director, CEO or Councillor
- **Where to find the response:** on Councils [website](#) - *Meetings, Agendas and Minutes* – under *Upcoming Meetings* or *Past Meetings*

Note: Electronically submitted questions will not be read aloud or discussed during the meeting.

QUESTION TYPES AND DEADLINES

1. Question Given on Notice

- **Deadline:** no later than midnight on the Tuesday one full week prior to the meeting
- **Response:** written only
- **Where to find the response:** published in the agenda found in ***Upcoming Meetings*** no later than 5pm on the Friday before the meeting and subsequently recorded in the minutes.

2. Question Without Notice

- **Deadline:** no later than 12pm on the Monday immediately prior to the meeting
- **Response:** written only
- **Where to find the response:** published in the ***Questions Without Notice*** folder found in ***Upcoming Meetings – Agenda*** no later than 3pm on the day of the meeting and subsequently recorded in the minutes.

3. Question Asked in Person at the Meeting

- You are welcome to attend the Ordinary Meeting of Council as a member of the gallery and ask your question in person which will be treated as a **Question Without Notice**
- **Response:** provided verbally during the meeting. **Note: debate cannot be entered into during Public Question Time, and Council cannot make decisions on matters that arise during this time**
- **Alternatively**, the question may be treated as a **Question Taken on Notice** (see point 4 below)
- **Where to find the written response:** published in the minutes found in ***Past Meetings – Minutes*** no later than 5pm Friday 1 full week after the meeting. **Note: this time frame could be extended to the following week due to unforeseen circumstances.**

4. Question Taken on Notice

- A Question Taken on Notice is one asked by a member of the gallery during the meeting where additional time is required to formulate an adequate and accurate response
- **Response:** written only
- **Where to find the response:** published in the agenda of the next available Ordinary Meeting of Council found in ***Upcoming Meetings – Agenda*** no later than 5pm on the Friday before the meeting and subsequently recorded in the minutes.

NEED FURTHER ASSISTANCE?

If you have any questions regarding this process, please don't hesitate to contact Council:

- **Phone:** 03 6264 0300
- **Email:** legal.pa@huonvalley.tas.gov.au

Please also see extract below from Council's ***Governance and Meeting Procedures Framework*** for general information regarding Public Question Time.

Extract from the Council's *Governance and Meeting Procedures Framework*

7.2 Meeting Procedures

Huon Valley Council meetings are governed by the Act and the Meeting Procedures Regulations.

Regulation 44 of the Meeting Procedures Regulations provides Council with the power to determine any procedures relating to a meeting of the Council (that are not otherwise provided within the regulations) it considers appropriate.

Regulation 36(3) of the Meeting Procedures Regulations also provides the Council with the power to determine any other procedures to be followed in respect of public question time at an ordinary meeting.

The following policy and procedures are determined for that purpose:

7.2.1 Questions Without Notice Policy

Pursuant to regulation 34 of the Meeting Procedures Regulations, questions without notice may be asked by a Councillor of, or through, the Chairperson at any time during a meeting for the purposes of discussion on an Agenda Item.

Time will also be set aside at an ordinary meeting of the Council as an item on the Agenda for that meeting to allow a Councillor to ask general questions without notice both in open and closed Council if necessary.

7.2.2 Public Question Time Policy and Procedure

Pursuant to Regulation 38 of the Meeting Procedures Regulations the Chairperson may address questions on notice submitted by members of the public and invite any member of the public present at an ordinary meeting to ask questions relating to the activities of the Council.

The Chairperson at an ordinary meeting of Council must ensure that, if required, at least 15 minutes of that meeting is made available for questions by members of the public.

Time will be set aside at an ordinary meeting of the Council as an item on the Agenda for public questions time which will be in accordance with the following Policy and Procedure:

- 1) A person seeking to ask a question must first stand and identify himself or herself.
- 2) No person will be entitled to ask more than 2 questions and will only be entitled to ask a second question after all other persons who wish to ask a question have asked one question each and the 15 minute period referred to in sub-clause (1) has not elapsed.

- 3) A question asked at a meeting is to, as far as is practicable, be concise, clear, not be a statement and have minimal preamble.
- 4) The Chairperson or Chief Executive as applicable under the Meeting Procedures Regulations may refuse to accept a question in Public Question Time if, in the opinion of that person that the question is:
 - defamatory; or contains unlawful language; or
 - is unlawful; or
 - does not relate to the activities of the Council; or
 - does not meet the requirements of paragraph 3) above.
- 5) To ensure Council decision making is not compromised the Chairperson or Chief Executive may refuse to answer a question in Public Question Time that:
 - relates to an item listed on the agenda for the Council meeting to be dealt as a planning authority under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*
 - relates to any matter which would normally be discussed in the closed section of the Council Meeting pursuant to Regulation 15 of the Meeting Procedures Regulations.

In addition to accepting questions from the public given formally on notice and made at the Council meeting, the Council will also provide the opportunity for members of the public to submit questions in writing prior to the Council meeting.

To be considered at the Council meeting these questions are to be received up to 12noon the Monday prior to the Council meeting and sent to the nominated email address.

Where these questions are received, every endeavour will be taken to provide an answer to those questions or they will otherwise be taken on notice if further investigation is required before an answer can be provided.

The questions received during this period and any answer given will not be read in full at the Council meeting. The questions however will be generally referred to by the Chairperson at commencement of public question time and any answers provided to those questions will be placed on the Council's website and included in the minutes of the Council Meeting.

Requests for further information or clarification on any answer given to a question raised at a Council meeting must be posed as a question for the next Council meeting. This will ensure transparency and that any further information will also be included on the public record.