

Name:	Public Question Time		
Type:	Council Policy		
Owner:	Chief Executive Officer		
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer		
Approval Date:	17/04/2018	Next Review Date:	1/01/2021
Records Number:	365926	Decision Number:	9/0011

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a clear and transparent framework for the coordination of questions from members of the public at Ordinary Meetings of Council.

2 PRINCIPLES

The City of Palmerston is committed to the principles of honest, open and accountable government and encourages the Community to raise issues and concerns which will be responded to and recorded in the Council Meeting Minutes.

3 DEFINITIONS

4 POLICY STATEMENT

A Public Question Time will be held within each Ordinary Council Meeting.

All questions to be asked a Public Question Time will be submitted in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Members of the public are able to submit public questions to the Council which will be responded to at Ordinary Council Meetings.
- All public questions are to be provided to the Chief Executive Officer in writing by 12:00 noon the business day prior to the Ordinary Council meetings, to allow time for a response to be provided.
- Public questions may be lodged with Council by email, letter or facsimile machine.
- Debate or discussion on a response is not permitted.
- Council will endeavour to provide a response at the next Ordinary Meeting, however if a question is unable to be answered by the next Ordinary Meeting, Council will advise and provide an estimated date for the question to be answered.

Copies of questions and answers will be delivered to Elected Members prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Copies of questions will be tabled at the meeting and uploaded onto the City of Palmerston website prior to the meeting.

Public Question Time will occur prior to the reception of Officers Reports and be not more than fifteen (15) minutes duration or two questions per person.

Questions and responses only will be read by the Chief Executive Officer, not any statements.

The Chief Executive Officer may refuse to accept a question for Public Question Time if:

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- The question is in the same nature as a matter to be discussed at the meeting that night and in the opinion of the Chief Executive Officer, Council's consideration of the matter may be prejudiced; or
- The questioner has submitted the same or a substantially similar question (in meaning or content) to one that he/she has asked and received a reply to in the previous three months; or
- The question pertains to a matter prescribed as confidential; or
- The question is in the nature of an administrative query, and the Chief Executive Officer considers it appropriate to respond administratively; or
- For any reason, the Chief Executive Officer deems to question to be inappropriate for answering.

In instances where the Chief Executive Officer refuses to accept a question for the purpose of Public Question Time, the questioner will be advised of the reasons for such action.

The person asking the question must be in attendance at Public Question Time for the answers to be read out at the Ordinary Meeting otherwise the answer will only be tabled in the minutes. The response will be forwarded to the person asking the question in writing following the meeting.

5 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

6 REFERENCES AND RELATED LEGISLATION

- 6.1 Palmerston (Procedures for Meetings) By-Laws