

CITY OF WAGGA WAGGA

PUBLIC ACCESS SESSION GUIDELINES

1. The City of Wagga Wagga's Public Access Session will be held at 5:30pm, prior to the Public Forum – Development Assessment and Policy, one week prior to the scheduled Ordinary Council meeting for a maximum of 30 minutes.
2. Members of the public are able to address Councillors on matters NOT INCLUDED in the Agenda for a Council Meeting, providing the matter is within the responsibilities of Council.

The Public Access Session is not a public meeting and does not form part of the Council Meeting. No decisions will be made by Council at the Public Access Session.

Members of the public wishing to address Council on matters included the Agenda of the Council Meeting need to make an application for Public Address at that meeting.

3. Members of the public wishing to speak at the Public Access Session must lodge an application by 10am on the day of the meeting.
4. All applications must be approved by the General Manager or his/her delegate.

At all times, the General Manager and/or Council retain the discretion to refuse a person the opportunity to address the Public Access Session.

Persons not registered to speak will not be able to address the Public Access Session.

5. Speakers will have five minutes to address the Public Access Session. An extension of time may be granted by Councillors.
6. Applications to speak at the Public Access Session will be limited to four per Session. Where more than four applications to speak are received, applications will be considered in order of the time of receipt.

Applications on the same or a related subject are restricted to a maximum of two per Public Access Session, one speaker for the subject and one speaker against the subject.

Where there are more than two applications received for the same subject, applications will be considered in order of the time of receipt.

7. Each speaker is required to state their name and any organisation/interest group they are representing before speaking.

8. Councillors may ask questions of the speaker.
9. The speaker will not be able to ask questions of Councillors or Council staff in relation to the matter.
10. Members of the public will not be permitted to raise matters or provide information on a matter which includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a standard request for Council services (which can be made by contacting Council's Customer Service during business hours)
 - personnel matters concerning particular individuals
 - personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer
 - information that would, if disclosed confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business
 - commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed:
 - i. prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it, or
 - ii. confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of Council, or
 - iii. reveal a trade secret
 - information that would, if disclosed prejudice the maintenance of law
 - matters affecting the security of Council, Councillors, Council staff or Council property
 - advice concerning litigation, or advice that would otherwise be privileged from production in legal proceedings on the ground of legal professional privilege
 - information concerning the nature and location of a place or an item of Aboriginal significance on community land
 - alleged contraventions of any Code of Conduct requirements applicable under Section 440 of the Local Government Act 1993 ("alleged contraventions of Council's Code of Conduct")
 - on balance, be contrary to public interest
11. Addresses should be courteous and concise. Members of the public will not be permitted to use the Public Access Session to defame, abuse, vilify, insult, threaten, intimidate or harass Councillors, Council staff or other members of the public. Conduct of this nature will be deemed to be an act of disorder and the person engaging in such behaviour will be ruled out of order and may be expelled from the meeting.

12. A person may be banned from addressing Council under the Public Access Session and/or Public Address processes for repeated acts of disorder or breaches of the Public Access Session/Address Guidelines.
13. The Public Access Session does not provide any protection from civil action arising from allegations or any libellous comments. Members of the public must be mindful of laws relating to defamation and libel. Speakers do not have protection of privilege in respect of anything said or any material presented to the Public Access Session.
14. Councillors are not entitled to use the Public Access Session for any purpose given opportunities are available to Councillors to raise matters formally.