

Petitions Management Policy

Reference number:	POL 086
Approval date:	17 October 2022
Policy owner:	Manager Governance and Risk
Next review:	September 2025

Petitions are an avenue for the community to express their concerns and/or request action regarding issues which the Council has power to act upon. For example, petitions may ask the Council to change an existing policy, a decision of Council or take action for a certain purpose or for the benefit of particular persons.

Purpose

- (i) To ensure the views of the community are presented to Councillors and staff to enable consideration when making decisions.
- (ii) To set out a consistent approach to ensure petitions are authentic and are handled in an effective and timely manner.

Scope

This Policy applies to all interested parties including residents/ratepayers within the Wagga Wagga Local Government area.

Policy Provisions

Receipt of Petitions

Council recognises that petitions are an effective means for interested parties, including community groups, residents and ratepayers, to express their views and to seek support of those views.

Petitions submitted to Council must include the (a) name, address and signature or (b) name and email address of at least ten persons seeking some form of action by the Council. It is considered that a petition containing at least ten signatories warrants consideration by Council.

For all petitions received by Council, Council will communicate only with either the person submitting the petition, or the person nominated as the contact person on the petition. Alternatively, if no-one is nominated as a contact person, then Council will communicate with the first signatory on the petition. Where Council has insufficient information to contact at least one signatory, Council will not consider the petition.

Submission of Petitions

There are a number of requirements governing the format and presentation of petitions. These ensure the authenticity of petitions and protect the intentions of petitioners and the Council.

To be presented to Council, a petition must include a clear and concise statement covering the purpose of the petition and the action petitioners want Council to take. The petition must be addressed to the General Manager. If a petition is received by a Councillor, he or she will forward it to the General Manager.

Written Petitions

Written petitions must:

- Be clearly legible, written in ink and in English without erasures or insertions, or be typed/computer printed with original signatures
- Contain the name, address/email address and signature of all petitioners
- Have all signatures written on a page bearing the terms of the petition or the action requested by the petition
- Have signatures which are not copied, pasted or transferred
- Be made by interested parties, including residents/ratepayers of the Wagga Wagga Local Government Area
- Be respectful and temperate in its language and not contain language disrespectful to Council
- Concern a matter on which Council has the power to act
- Contain a summary of the reasons for the request
- State the name, address/email address and phone number of the person lodging the petition
- Not have any letters or other documents attached to it, but may contain photographs which highlight the purpose of the petition
- Not be objections to Building or Development Applications as these will not be considered as petitions under this Policy. These will be dealt with under Section 1.9 of the Wagga Wagga Development Control Plan 2010 “Process following receipt of Submissions.”

Online Petitions

Online petitions will be considered by Council on their merits.

All online petitions must:

- State the name, address/email address of the person lodging the petition
- Contain the name of all petitioners including either address/email address or area of residence
- Be made by interested parties, including residents/ratepayers of the Wagga Wagga Local Government Area
- Be respectful and temperate in its language and not contain language disrespectful to Council
- Concern a matter on which Council has the power to act
- Contain a summary of the reasons for the request
- Not have any letters or other documents attached to it, but may contain photographs which highlight the purpose of the petition

- Not be objections to Building or Development Applications as these will not be considered as petitions under this Policy. These will be dealt with under Section 1.9 of the Wagga Wagga Development Control Plan 2010 “Process following receipt of Submissions.”

Specific Provisions

Lodgement

Written Petitions

A Petition Lodgement Form must be attached to the front of the petition containing a clear statement identifying the subject matter of the petition as well as specifying the number of pages and number of signatories included in the petition.

A sample petition and lodgement form is attached to this Policy (Appendix A).

The original petition, (no copies), addressed to the General Manager may be hand delivered to Council’s Civic Centre, cnr Baylis and Morrow Streets Wagga Wagga, emailed to Council@wagga.nsw.gov.au , faxed to Council’s fax number (02) 6926 9199 or mailed to P.O. Box 20 Wagga Wagga NSW 2650.

If a petition is faxed or emailed then the original petition containing original signatures is to be provided to Council as soon as practicable and prior to the Council meeting at which it will be tabled.

Online Petitions

Lodgement of online petitions may be made by email to Council@wagga.nsw.gov.au including the name and address/email address of a contact person for the petition, and a link to the petition.

Petitions may also be lodged with Councillors who should then refer such petition to the General Manager.

If Council receives a petition which relates to the jurisdiction of another legislative body (such as Riverina Water County Council, State Government, or an electricity supplier) the lead petitioner will be contacted and advised to submit the petition to the more appropriate body.

Determination

Upon receipt of the petition, the General Manager will refer the petition to the appropriate department for investigation and/or compilation of a report to Council.

The relevant directorate will acknowledge receipt by return mail/email to the representative who has lodged the petition.

A nominated officer from that department will keep the initiator of the petition informed of any progress and will provide notification of when the petition will be tabled at a Council meeting.

A report will be prepared by the responsible Directorate for inclusion in the next available Council business paper detailing:

- the name of the petition contact person
- the nature of the request or issue(s) raised
- the number of signatories on the petition
- the date the petition was initiated
- the date the petition was received by Council
- additional background information known to Council officers relating to the request or issue raised including links to the City of Wagga Wagga's Community Strategic Plan – 2040 and any relevant considerations, as well as budget and other programmed work matters
- a recommendation relating to the request or issue that takes account of the petitioner's request/needs as well as the needs and expectations of the wider community

For privacy reasons, only the substance of the petition and the number of signatories will appear in the business paper; the full petition will be available for viewing by Councillors only at the meeting.

If further investigation is required into the request or issue, this will be noted in the report. A subsequent report will be submitted to the next Council meeting with an appropriate recommendation relating to the request or issue.

Where a recommendation is made in relation to a petition, the report will be submitted to a Council meeting. The petitioner will be given the opportunity to apply to address the Council regarding the petition.

When the matter is considered by Council it will decide what action, if any, to take on the petition. The nominated Council officer will then notify the person who lodged the petition of Council's decision within seven days after the petition is tabled.

A register of all petitions received by Wagga Wagga City Council will be maintained within Council. This register will be maintained by Council's Governance and Risk Division.

Conduit for Petitions of External Parties

Occasionally Council will be asked by external parties to have available at its Customer Service Centre a petition for the purposes of gaining signatures. This will not be permitted unless extraordinary circumstances exist. In the rare event that such circumstances exist, it will be at the discretion of the General Manager as to whether it is appropriate for Council to act in this manner and accept such petitions for these purposes.

Repeat Petitions

A petition will not be considered where it is received within 12 months of another petition being considered by Council on the same matter. When a petition is received on a similar issue to a previous petition, petitioners will be notified of the outcome of the previous petition if Council officers consider that the issues raised have been addressed.

Legislative Context

Local Government Act 1993

Related Documents

Code of Meeting Practice

Definitions

Term	Definition
Petition	A request to Council seeking action or special consideration of a particular matter, that Council is authorised to determine, and which is signed by at least ten residents/ratepayers/interest parties from at least ten different property addresses.

Revision History

Revision number	Council resolution	Council meeting date
1	Res No: 11/167	25 July 2011
2	Res No: 13/187	29 July 2013
3	Res No: 13/224.1	26 August 2013
4	Res No: 15/339.13	23 November 2015
5	Endorsed by GM	4 July 2016
6	Res No: 17/279	28 August 2017
7	Approval by General Manager under delegated authority	17 December 2021
8	Res: 22/354	17 October 2022