

# Petition Policy

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<b>Strategic Pillar</b>	Community, Arts & Recreation
<b>Responsible Branch</b>	Customer, Communication and Libraries

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## 1 OUTCOMES:

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the parameters for submitting petitions to Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and how they will be dealt with.
- 1.2 This policy aims to ensure that a consistent process applies to each petition so that they are treated in a timely and effective manner and that they come to the notice of the relevant operational area of Council and Councillors.

## 2 SCOPE OF THE POLICY:

- 2.1 Although not specified within the provisions of the *NSW Local Government Act (1993)* and the *Local Government Regulation (2005)*, Council recognises that petitions form part of the democratic process which allows residents to engage with Council on matters of concern and interest.
- 2.2 This policy applies to the submission of petitions to Council for its consideration.

## 3 POLICY:

- 3.1 Council welcomes the submission of petitions from members of its community and recognises them as being part of the community engagement process.
- 3.2 A petition must pertain to the legislative responsibilities of Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council. Petitions relating to issues/matters outside of Council's direct area of responsibility will not be accepted.
- 3.3 Council will not accept petitions that:
  - (a) Do not relate to Council's functions or legislative responsibilities
  - (b) Are vexatious, libellous, abusive, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate.
  - (c) Pertain to any current court or legislative proceedings.
  - (d) Are the same or very similar to petitions that Council has already considered in the previous 12 months, except where a matter is being brought to the attention of the newly elected Council.
  - (e) Relate to any individual or personal circumstances of individual councillors or employees of Council.
  - (f) Contain false information such as names of people who have not consented to be signatories of the petition or do not meet the property owner/residency/work requirements to be a signatory.
  - (g) Do not clearly specify who is the Petition Organiser.
- 3.4 To be considered a petition, the document must contain the name and address of at least five people who either own property, reside or work within the Queanbeyan-Palerang Local Government Area.
- 3.5 Each Petition must have a designated Petition Organiser who is responsible for coordinating the production of the petition and whom Council can contact to discuss the petition's submission and processing. Each petition must outline

the name, contact details (address, telephone number and email address) of the Petition Organiser.

#### 4 DEFINITIONS:

**Petition** - is a formally drawn up request to Council seeking action or special consideration of a particular matter pertaining to the legislative responsibilities of Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, which is signed by a minimum of five property owners/residents/members of the public who either live or work in the Queanbeyan-Palerang Local Government Area.

**Petition Organiser** - is the person who is coordinating the production of the petition and whom Council can contact to discuss the submission and processing of the petition.

#### 5 LEGISLATIVE OBLIGATIONS AND/OR RELEVANT STANDARDS:

5.1 The Office of Local Government's Meetings Practice Note No.16 advises that there is no statutory basis under either the *Local Government Act (1993)* or the *Local Government Regulation (2005)* which requires councils to either recognise or deal with petitions. However, it does advise, '*...it is a matter for each council to decide what to do with petitions and to set this out in its Meeting Code.*'(p.21)

5.2 Petitions will form part of the Public Forum at Ordinary Council meetings. Petitions will be tabled at each Public Forum with the General Manager responsible through their delegate (Manager Customer, Communication and Libraries) for distribution to the appropriate operational area of Council for consideration.

#### 6 CONTENT:

6.1 Petitions must be accompanied by contact details including an address, telephone number and email address for the Petition Organiser. If a petition does not clearly identify a Petition Organiser, Council reserves the right to reject the petition.

6.1.1 The Petition Organiser is to ensure that the petition contains:

- (a) A clear and concise statement identifying the subject matter of the petition.
- (b) A statement specifying the number of pages to the petition and the number of signatories.
- (c) The full name, address, phone number and signature of the person lodging the petition (the Petition Organiser), together with the name of the organisation/group they represent, if the petition is submitted on behalf of that organisation or group.
- (d) Only names and signatures of persons who meet the requirements set out in Clause 3.4

- 6.2 The petition must contain the following details:
- (a) A heading on each page indicating the subject matter of the petition.
  - (b) The legible name, address and signature of those people who are signatories of the petition. Council reserves the right to reject a petition if it is found to contain false names or the names of people who have not consented to being a signatory.
- A sample petition lodgement form is attached to this policy.
- 6.3 In the instance that a Petition Organiser uses an online platform for gaining signatures for their petition, they must ensure that the final version of the petition includes only those signatories who own property, reside, or work in the Queanbeyan-Palerang Local Government Area.
- 6.4 A Petition Organiser may lodge a petition by forwarding it to the General Manager via email to [council@qprc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@qprc.nsw.gov.au), via mail to PO Box 90 Queanbeyan NSW 2620, by hand delivery to the General Manager's office in 257 Crawford Street, Queanbeyan, or in person to Council offices in Queanbeyan, Bungendore or Braidwood where it will be forwarded to the General Manager.
- 6.5 The General Manager, or delegate, will ensure that the petition is tabled during the Public Forum of the next Ordinary Meeting of Council. Petitions received less than seven days before an Ordinary Meeting will be held over to the next meeting.
- 6.6 A copy of the petition will be circulated to Councillors prior to it being tabled at a Council meeting.
- 6.7 The Petition Organiser will be advised of the date which the petition will be tabled and is able to speak to the petition for up to three minutes.
- 6.8 Council will decide what action, if any, it will take on a petition after the petition is tabled during the Public Forum at a Council meeting.
- 6.9 Council will record in the minutes for the Public Forum the subject matter of the petition and the number of signatories. The petition will not be published on Council's website or form part of a Business Paper report.
- 6.10 After the petition is tabled at a Council meeting, it will be distributed to the appropriate operational area of Council for consideration.
- 6.11 The General Manager or delegate, will inform the Petition Organiser of Council's decision and any actions applicable, within 21 days after the petition is tabled.
- 6.12 Information provided to Council in a petition is protected by the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act (1998)*. This is embodied in Council's Privacy Management Plan which is available on Council's website or on request. Any questions concerning privacy or the use of personal information should be referred to Council's Coordinator Governance and Legal. Details of persons signing a petition will generally only be used by Council to verify that the signatories qualify as having a direct interest in the Queanbeyan-Palerang Local Government Area as required by this policy.

# Petition lodgement form

To Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council:

Please find attached a petition concerning the following subject.

**SUBJECT OF THE PETITION:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Number of persons who have signed the petition and number of signed pages attached</b>	
<b>Signature of person lodging petition [The Petition Organiser]</b>	
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Mobile or home phone</b>	
<b>Name of organisation/group if acting on behalf of organisation/group</b>	

**Note:** Telephone numbers will be used to enable contact between Council and the person lodging this petition.

## Privacy Statement

Apart from petitions in relation to development applications, information provided to Council in a petition is protected by the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act, 1998*. This is embodied in Council's *Privacy Management Plan* which is available on Council's website or on request. Any questions concerning privacy or the use of personal information should be referred to Council's Service Manager, Workplace and Governance.

Details of persons signing a petition will generally only be used by Council to verify that the signatories qualify as having a direct interest in the Queanbeyan-Palerang Local Government Area as required by this policy.

