


Petition Policy

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1. OUTCOMES:

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the parameters for submitting petitions to Council and how they will be dealt with.
- 1.2 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 allowing residents to engage with the Council on matters of concern.
- 1.3 This policy aims to ensure that a consistent process applies to each petition so that they are treated in a timely manner and effectively come to the notice of councillors and relevant staff.

2. POLICY:

- 2.1 Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council welcomes the lodging of petitions from members of its community and recognises them as being part of the community engagement process which allows community members to express their views to the body politic.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 Council will not accept petitions that:
 - Do not relate to the council's functions or legislative responsibilities
 - Are vexatious, libellous, abusive, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate
 - Pertain to any current court or legislative proceedings
 - Are the same or very similar to petitions that Council has already considered in the previous 12 months
 - Relate to any individual or personal circumstances of individual Councillors or employees of the Council
 - Contain false information such as names of people who have not consented to be signatories of the petition or do not meet the residency/work requirements to be a signatory
 - Do not clearly specify who is the Petition Organiser
- 2.4 To be considered a petition the document must contain the name, address and contact details of at least TWENTY (20) people who either own property, reside or work within the Queanbeyan-Palerang Local Government Area.
- 2.5 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 lodging and processing. Each petition MUST outline the name, contact details (address, telephone number and e-mail address) of the Petition Organiser.
- 2.6 Petitions must be lodged in writing to the Chief Executive Officer at the following address:
QPRC
PO Box 90
Queanbeyan NSW 2620
- 2.7 Once a petition has been tabled with council the petition will be deemed 'finalised' and no further additions to that petition will be accepted.
- 2.8 A Petition Organiser may opt to utilise an electronic petition service. However, they must ensure that:

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- The petition adequately addresses the criteria as per Clauses 6.1 – 6.3 of this policy, and
- A hard copy of the final petition is to be presented to Council for tabling at the Public Forum.

3 SCOPE OF THE POLICY:

- 3.1 This policy applies to the lodging of petitions to Council for its consideration.

4 DEFINITIONS:

- 4.1 **Petition** - is a formally drawn up request to the 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 number of property owners/residents/members of the public who either live or work in the Queanbeyan-Palerang Local Government Area.
- 4.2 **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. Each petition MUST outline the name, contact details (address, telephone number and/or e-mail address) of the Petition Organiser.

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 Council has agreed that petitions will form part of the Public Forum. Petitions will be tabled at each Public Forum with the CEO/General Manager responsible through his delegate (the Service Manager Governance) 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/or e-mail address for the Petition Organiser. If a petition does not clearly identify a Petition Organiser Council will reserve the right to not accept the petition.
- 6.2 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 printed name, address, phone number, and/or e-mail address 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) Ensure that all signatories are legitimate as required by this policy. Signatories must either be a property owner, resident, business owner or worker within the Queanbeyan-Palerang local government area.
 - (e) If a signatory is under the age of 18 years that parental consent has been given to participate in the petition.

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- 6.3 The Petition must contain the following details:
- (a) A heading on each page indicating the subject matter of the petition and the action sought from Council.
 - (b) The legible name, address and signature of those people who 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 lodgment form is attached to this policy

- 6.4 A Petition Organiser may lodge a petition with the Council by forwarding it to the CEO/General Manager at Council's postal address or by personally dropping off the document at the GM/CEO's Office in Queanbeyan.
- 6.5 The CEO/General Manager, via the Service Manager Governance will ensure that the Petition is tabled at the next Public Forum which accompanies each Ordinary Meeting of Council.
- 6.6 Council will decide what action, if any, it will take on a petition after the petition is tabled at the Public Forum.
- 6.7 Council will record in the minutes for the Public Forum the subject matter of the petition, the number of signatories to the petition, and what action, if any, it will take. A list of Petitions Tabled will be set out on Council's website.
- 6.8 The Service Manager Governance will inform the Petition Organiser of Council's decision within twenty one (21) days after the petition is tabled.
- 6.9 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 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. Council will not pass petition signatories' personal information onto third parties.

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Petition lodgment form

To the Mayor and Councillors of Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council:

Please find attached a petition concerning the following subject.

SUBJECT OF PETITION: _____

Number of persons who have signed the petition and number of signed pages attached	
Signature of person lodging petition[The Petition Organiser]	
Name	
Address	
Telephone/E-mail	(home) (work) (mobile) (e-mail)(optional)
If acting on behalf of organisation/group, name of organisation/group	

Note: Telephone numbers and e-mail will be used to enable contact between Council and the person lodging this petition (The Petition Organiser).

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. 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. Council will not pass petition signatories' personal information on to third parties.

