

Petition Policy

Date policy was adopted:	12 August 2022
Resolution number:	279/22
Next Policy review date:	July 2024
Reference number:	52.5.4
Strategic Pillar	Community, Arts and Recreation
Responsible Branch	Customer and Communication

This is a controlled document. Before using this document, ensure it is the latest version by checking QPRC's intranet, website or Electronic Document Register Management System. Printed or downloaded versions of this document are uncontrolled.

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 which allows residents to engage with the Council on matters of concern and interest.
- 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 submission of petitions from members of its community and recognises them as being part of the community engagement process allowing 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 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, except where a matter is being brought to the attention of newly elected Council.
 - Relate to any individual or personal circumstances of individual councillors or employees of Council
 - 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
 - Do not clearly specify who is the Petition Organiser.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.6 Petitions must be submitted in writing to the General Manager via email to council@qprc.nsw.gov.au or via mail, or delivery to PO Box 90 Queanbeyan NSW 2620.

3. SCOPE OF THE POLICY:

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

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 2.3
- 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 lodgment form is attached to this policy

- 6.3 A Petition Organiser may lodge a petition with the Council by forwarding it to the General Manager at Council's postal address, by hand-delivery at the General Manager's Office in Queanbeyan or via email to council@qprc.nsw.gov.au.
- 6.4 The General Manager, via the Manager Customer, Communication and Libraries, will ensure that the Petition is tabled at the next Public Forum which precedes each Ordinary Meeting of Council. Petitions received less than seven days before an Ordinary Meeting will be held over to the next meeting. 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.
- 6.5 Council will decide what action, if any, it will take on a petition after the petition is tabled at its Ordinary meeting.
- 6.6 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. The Petition will not be published on Council's website or form part of a Business Paper report.
- 6.7 The Manager Customer, Communication and Libraries will inform the Petition Organiser of Council's decision within 21 days after the petition is tabled.
- 6.8 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 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	
Contact details	Mobile/home phone number Email address:
If acting on behalf of organisation/group, name of organisation/group	

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.

Petition

To the Mayor and Councillors of Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council

SUBJECT OF PETITION: _____

ACTION REQUESTED: We, the undersigned, petition the Mayor and Councillors of Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council to: *[clear and precise statement setting out what the petitioners are asking council to do]*

Name (please print)	Address (please print)	Signature

Attach additional pages as necessary

