

Attachment C

City of Sydney Public Forum Guidelines

Guidelines for Speakers at Public Forums

Note: *The Office of Local Government has mandated that public forums should not be held as part of a council or committee meeting. Council or committee meetings should be reserved for decision-making by the council or committee of council.*

Committee reports are available at <https://meetings.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/>

Webcast

Public forums are recorded and webcast live on the City of Sydney website at <https://webcast.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/>

Members of the public attending a public forum may have their image, voice and personal information (including name and address) recorded, publicly broadcast and archived for the balance of the council's term or at least 12 months after the meeting, whichever is the longer period.

Consent

By attending a public forum, members of the public consent to this use of their image, voice and personal information.

Disclaimer

Statements made by individuals at public forums, and which may be contained in a live stream or recording of the meeting are those of the individuals making them, and not of the City. To be clear, unless set out in a resolution of council, the City does not endorse or support such statements.

The City does not accept any liability for statements made or actions taken by individuals during a public forum that may be contrary to law, including discriminatory, defamatory or offensive comments. Such statements or actions are not protected by privilege and may be the subject of legal proceedings and potential liability, for which the City takes no responsibility.

Guidelines for City of Sydney Public Forums

1. The City of Sydney Council will hold a public forum prior to meetings of committees of the council for the purpose of hearing oral submissions from members of the public on items of business to be considered at the meetings of committees of the council.
2. Public forums will be held from 1pm for up to one hour, with meetings of committees of the council to commence at 2pm.
3. Public forums are to be chaired by the Lord Mayor or their nominee.
4. To speak at a public forum, a person must first register with the Secretariat in accordance with the information on the City's website. Applications to speak at the public forum must be received by 12pm on the day on which the public forum is to be held, and must identify the item of business on the agenda of the committee meeting the person wishes to speak on, and whether they wish to speak 'for' or 'against' the item. The chairperson will determine the order of speakers at the public forum (generally by order of agenda item and registration), as required.
5. If there are no registrations to speak at a public forum at 12pm on the day on which the public forum is to be held, the public forum will not be required and this will be noted on the City's website.
6. Speakers should avoid repeating what previous speakers have said and focus on issues and information that the Council may not already know. If there is a large number of people interested in the same item speakers should try to nominate 3 representatives to speak on their behalf and to indicate how many people they are representing.

7. Each speaker will be allowed 3 minutes to address the council. Speakers at public forums must not digress from the item on the agenda of the meeting they have applied to address the council on. If a speaker digresses to irrelevant matters, the chairperson is to direct the speaker not to do so. If a speaker fails to observe a direction from the chairperson, the speaker will not be further heard.
8. A councillor (including the chairperson) may, through the chairperson, ask questions of a speaker following their address at a public forum. Questions put to a speaker must be direct, succinct and without argument. The chairperson may limit the number of questions that can be asked of speakers to ensure as many registered participants as possible can be heard.
9. Speakers should address the public forum and Council with respect and refrain from inappropriate behaviour.
10. The chairperson may require people to leave the public forum if they are disrupting the meeting in accordance with Part 15 of the Code of Meeting Practice.
11. Councillors (including the Lord Mayor) must declare and manage any conflicts of interest they may have in relation to any item of business that is the subject of an address at a public forum, in the same way that they are required to do so at a council or committee meeting. The council is to maintain a written record of all conflict of interest declarations made at public forums and how the conflict of interest was managed by the councillor who made the declaration.
12. The rules for the conduct of public forums can be varied from time to time at the discretion of Council to ensure the efficient and effective conduct of the public forums. The failure to comply with these Guidelines does not constitute a breach of the Code of Meeting Practice or the Local Government Act 1993 and does not invalidate any subsequent decision of Council.
13. Public forums are recorded and webcast live on the City of Sydney website. Livestreaming is undertaken in accordance with clauses 5.35 to 5.55 of the Code of Meeting Practice