

Public Question Time at Council Meetings



What is Public Question Time?

This is your opportunity to ask questions relating to any matters affecting the City of Swan.

How long is allowed for Public Question Time?

Extension of time, in 10 minute increments, is at the discretion of the Presiding Member. The Presiding Member will take into account all the business required to be considered at the meeting when making this determination. The maximum amount of time will be limited to 30 minutes.

Can I submit my questions prior to a Council meeting?

Yes, we request you submit your questions in writing as early as possible.

This allows us to conduct any research required to give you an informative and considered answer to your question and means you are more likely to get an answer on the night rather than your question/s needing to be taken on notice.

Questions submitted by 5.00pm the Friday prior to the Council meeting will be considered as 'questions with notice'. The City will endeavour to have a written response to your questions available at the Council meeting.

Questions submitted after this time will be considered as 'questions without notice', and will only be responded to if the information is readily available, otherwise they will be taken on notice with a response included in the agenda and minutes of the next Ordinary Meeting of Council.

Is there an opportunity to ask verbal questions at the Council meeting?

Yes. There will be an opportunity to ask verbal questions at the Council meeting. Please register to ask verbal questions.

Questions will only be responded to if the information is readily available, otherwise they will be taken on notice with a response included in the agenda and minutes of the next Ordinary Meeting of Council.

How many questions may I ask?

To give an equal and fair opportunity to each member of the public that wishes to ask questions, each questioner will be limited to five questions (in writing or verbal) at a time. Questions with multiple parts will be considered as separate questions.

If time permits, those that have already asked questions may be provided with an additional opportunity to ask further questions.

What order will questions be considered in?

Questions will be considered in the following priority order:

1. Questions relating to matters within the meeting's agenda
 - a. Written questions received prior to the meeting
 - b. Verbal questions from those who registered prior to the meeting
 - c. Any other verbal questions, time permitting.
2. Questions relating to other matters affecting the City
 - a. Written questions received prior to the meeting
 - b. Verbal questions from those who registered prior to the meeting
 - c. Any other verbal questions, time permitting.

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What happens at the Council meeting?

The Presiding Member will call people forward to ask their questions. Persons will be requested to come forward as per the order of priority of questions (above) and in the order which they registered.

Please walk to the microphone, state your full name and suburb of residence and then proceed to ask your questions one at a time.

How should I ask my questions?

Questions should be directed at the Presiding Member and should be asked politely, in good faith, and are not to be framed in such a way as to reflect adversely or be defamatory on a particular Councillor, City employee or member of the public.

A short statement to provide background and context to a question is permitted but should be kept concise and relevant. Please keep your questions brief.

How are questions answered?

Questions may be answered at the meeting by the Presiding Member, Chief Executive Officer or another Councillor or City staff member.

Please note that no debate or discussion about the question or answer will take place at the meeting.

If your question cannot be answered at the meeting and an answer requires further research it will be taken on notice. A response will be provided in the agenda of the next ordinary meeting of Council.

Are questions and answers included in the minute of the meeting?

Yes. Questions and answers will be summarised and included in the minutes of the meeting.

Are there any restrictions on what may be asked?

It is not intended that question time should be used as a means to obtain detailed information or information that would not be made available if it was sought from the City's records under section 5.94 of the *Local Government Act 1995* or the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (FOI Act). Where the response to a question would require a substantial commitment of the City's resources, the CEO may determine that it is an unreasonable impost upon the City and decline to provide it. The CEO will advise the member of the public that the information may be sought in accordance with the FOI Act.

Who can I contact?

To register for Public Question Time or for further information please contact the City's Governance Support Officer by calling 9267 9267 or by email at council.meetings@swan.wa.gov.au.