

# Special Meeting of Electors

5.30pm, Monday 28th March

Bridgetown Leisure Centre

## Frequently Asked Questions

We have been getting lots of questions so have prepared these frequently asked questions and responses to provide more information and respond to queries.

### Who has requested the meeting and what is its purpose?

Council received a petition signed by 270 electors requesting a Special Meeting of Electors.

The petition stated the following as the purpose (matters to be discussed) of the meeting:

1. The Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes community being declared a Pro Choice community in relation to the State Government vaccination mandates.
2. To hear and discuss community concerns in relation to the vaccination mandates. We request a vote be taken at the Special Meeting of Electors to oppose vaccination mandates and declare Bridgetown-Greenbushes a Pro Choice community.
3. That the President (of the Council) advise the Premier and State Parliament of community concerns in relation to existing mandates and request they refrain from imposing further mandates as well as removing all existing mandates currently in place.

### I would like to participate (and vote) in the meeting but I can't attend in-person. Can people participate and vote online or send in a voting slip before or after the meeting?

Online participation isn't permitted. The Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries has given a directive to all local governments that elector meetings cannot be held electronically and must be held in an 'in-person' format. This also prevents voting being done outside of the meeting itself.

The Shire will livestream the meeting on its Facebook page but this will only allow viewers to watch and listen to the meeting. There isn't any opportunity for persons not in attendance to speak or vote at the meeting.

### Can I nominate a proxy to use my vote?

No votes can only be made by electors in attendance at the meeting.

### How many people can attend the meeting?

500 persons can attend.

Under current COVID-19 restrictions a total of 300 persons can attend inside the Leisure Centre and a further 200 persons can attend outside.

This will be made up of 150 in the double court and 150 in the single court as these are classified as two separate indoor spaces. A further 200 persons can be accommodated outside in the paved area and terraced seating in the aquatic section.

A manual count will be conducted and strict adherence to the 150 person per inside room and 200 persons in the outside space maximum capacities will be enforced.

Persons are required to stay in each of these spaces unless choosing to leave the meeting. People will not be permitted to congregate in the foyer or corridors.

### Why is the Meeting being held at the Leisure Centre?

This is the only indoor facility in the Shire that can accommodate the expected attendance under current COVID-19 restrictions. This was also the preferred venue of the petitioners. The alternative was to hold an outdoors meeting but this option was rejected by the petition organisers as the meeting would have to be held earlier in the day to make sure it finished before dark and there could also be adverse weather that could impact an outdoor meeting.

#### **The time isn't convenient to me, can it be rescheduled?**

Public notice of the meeting has been given in accordance with the Local Government Act. It is too late to change the timing of the meeting on Monday 28th March. The time of 5.30pm was chosen as it is straight after work hours for a majority of our community. The setting of the date and time was made in consultation with the representative of the petitioners requesting the meeting.

#### **Can I reserve a spot to ensure that I can attend?**

No. Entry to the meeting will be by 'first come, first served' basis. Once the 500 person maximum capacity is reached no further entry to the meeting will be permitted.

It is expected that the first 300 persons that arrive will be accommodated in the indoor spaces. After this number is reached the remaining 200 persons will have to be accommodated in the outdoor aquatic centre space.

#### **Who will Chair the Meeting?**

The Shire President will chair.

#### **Who can attend the Meeting?**

Anyone can attend.

#### **Who can ask questions and vote on motions at an Electors Meeting?**

Only electors can ask questions and vote.

An elector in the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes is defined as "a person who is eligible to be enrolled to vote at elections for the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes and includes ratepayers". Hence persons either enrolled to vote or eligible to be included on the electoral roll (via ownership of property or as a resident of property in the Shire) can vote at a Special Electors Meeting.

Voting will be done under an "honour system" where only people that believe they meet the definition should vote. The Shire President will announce this at the commencement of the meeting but of course there is no way we can be absolutely sure that only electors participate.

When comparing the inconvenience and time issues of having to check names and addresses of up to 500 persons arriving at the meeting this was seen to be the better option.

A separate process will exist however for anyone that wishes to speak at the meeting – either asking a question in the 'Questions and Answers' section of the meeting, or speaking for or against a motion in the 'Consideration of Motions' section. Persons wishing to speak will be required to provide evidence of their status as an elector and if proven to be an elector a wristband will be provided so the person can be pre-approved to speak. Suitable ID to confirm you are an elector can include:

- Photo ID such as a drivers licence with a local address
- Other photo ID that confirms identity and other ID (such as a utility bill) that shows your local residential address
- Other photo ID that confirms identity – we can then check our property ownership data base to prove you are an owner of land in the Shire

A Shire staff member will be in attendance at the Leisure Centre from 3.30pm on the day of the meeting to check the eligibility of any person as an elector and issue wristbands.

If a person decides during the meeting they would like to speak but haven't been pre-approved as an elector, they can approach a Shire staff member at the meeting and they can quickly perform the identity process and issue a wristband.

We will ask any person seeking to ask a question or speak to state their name for the record so the minutes can accurately reflect the proceedings.

The Shire President has pre-approved some speakers to provide presentations at Part 4 of the order of proceedings. These presenters are not required to be electors of the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes.

### **Can children attend?**

As we aren't checking persons attending for compliance in meeting the definition of an elector, children in the company of an adult will be permitted to attend.

We are conscious that not all parents/carers have access to childcare or support and acknowledge that bringing their children with them may be necessary.

### **Do I have to be vaccinated for COVID-19 to attend the meeting?**

No

### **Do I have to wear a mask at the meeting?**

Yes, all persons aged 8 years or over must wear a mask to attend this meeting - unless you can produce the authorised medical exemption in the form of a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner. This requirement will be strictly enforced.

### **How will all the people attending see and hear the meeting – noting there are multiple areas where people will be?**

The Shire President will chair the meeting from the double court space. The proceedings in this space will be live recorded onto a screen in the single court space so that attendees in that space can follow the meeting.

It isn't possible to set up a screen in the outdoor aquatic centre space as people so only audio speakers will be in place. This will allow people in this space to hear the proceedings but no view.

A microphone will be set up at the front of the double court space for people to use when speaking.

If persons in the single court space or outdoor aquatic centre space wish to speak at the meeting they can approach a Shire staff member in these areas – the staff member will escort them to a microphone in the double court so that they can be seen by the recording camera and heard by everyone in attendance.

### **Order of Proceedings at the Electors Meeting**

1. Opening and Introduction
2. Welcome to Country
3. Description of the Business to be discussed - as stated in Form 1 (Petition)
4. Presentations from/on behalf of Petitioners (Pre-approved by the Shire President)
5. Questions and Answers:
  - i. Only persons that have been confirmed as an elector will be permitted to ask a question.

- ii. This section is for questions only, not debate.
  - iii. Persons can ask a question for the Council to answer (via the Shire President or a person nominated by the President) or the petitioners' representative.
6. Consideration of Motions
- i. Only persons that have been confirmed as an elector will be permitted to speak for or against a motion.
  - ii. Speakers "For" and "Against" alternatively.
  - iii. Maximum speaking time per person is four (4) minutes.
  - iv. After a minimum of 5 speakers "for" (not including the mover and seconder) and 5 speakers "against" a motion the Presiding Member can end debate and allow the mover the 'right of reply' to any points made by speakers against the motion by other speakers. The motion can then be put to the vote.
  - v. The petitioners have provided notice of 5 motions to be moved at the meeting. These will be the first 5 motions considered at the meeting. After these motions have been considered, motions from the floor can be presented. Visit our website to view the 5 motions: [www.bridgetown.wa.gov.au/events/special-meeting-of-electors/254](http://www.bridgetown.wa.gov.au/events/special-meeting-of-electors/254).
7. Close.

### **How does voting occur?**

Voting will only take place after that motion has been moved and seconded and debate has ceased. Only electors are allowed to vote at the meeting. Secret voting is not permitted and voting is not compulsory. All decisions are to be made by simple majority by way of show of hands. Votes are only manually counted if a clear majority is not assumed by the showing of hands. If a motion is carried it will be recorded in that manner and the actual breakdown of votes won't be recorded.

### **What happens to motions that are carried (passed) at the Electors Meeting?**

Decisions made at a Special Meeting of Electors are required to be considered in accordance with s5.33 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, which states:

*5.33 Decision made at electors' meetings*

1. *All decisions made at an electors' meeting are to be considered at the next ordinary council meeting or, if that is not practicable –*
  - a. *a. at the first ordinary council meeting after that meeting; or*
  - b. *b. at a special meeting called for that purpose, whichever happens first.*
2. *If at a meeting of the council a local government makes a decision in response to a decision made at an electors' meeting, the reasons for the decision are to be recorded in the minutes of the council meeting.*

Although there is a council meeting scheduled for Thursday 31st March 2022 the agenda for that meeting has already been released. Therefore any motions carried at the Special Meeting of Electors will be presented to the following scheduled council meeting on Thursday 28th April 2022.

It should be noted that any decisions made at a Special Meeting of Electors are not binding on the Council.

### **Will I be able to get a copy of the minutes of the Electors' Meeting?**

Yes. The Shire takes minutes of the proceedings of all Electors' Meetings. These will be published and made publicly available.