

## G 23 – Concept Forums

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### 1 Objectives

The objectives of this Concept Forum Policy are:

- a. To enable Council to discuss, introduce and progress strategy within a less restrictive meeting arena.
- b. To generate strategic initiative, innovation and thinking across all current and future Council business.
- c. To enable Officers and Council to collaborate on strategy moving forward.

### 2 Scope

This policy applies to all employees and Councillors.

### 3 Definitions

#### 3.1 Councillor

means members of an elected body that make decisions on behalf of a local government through a formal meeting process. Generally, local government council members, who include the Mayor or President and Councillors, do not have any authority to act or make decisions as individuals.

#### 3.2 Employee

means a person that's hired to provide a service to a company either on a full-time, part-time or casual basis in exchange for payment. Also known as staff.

#### 3.3 Worker

means a worker is any person who carries out work for a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU), including work as an employee, outworker, apprentice or trainee, work experience student, placed with a 'host employer' and volunteers.

### 4 Policy

Council and Officers will use the Concept Forum to:

- a. Foster an open and flexible meeting environment, facilitating discussions, introductions, and the progression of strategies that are advantageous to the Shire.
- b. Stimulate strategic thinking, innovation, and initiative across all present and future Council endeavors.
- c. Promote collaboration between the Officers and the Council, thereby advancing strategic agendas effectively.
- d. Inform the decision-making process within Ordinary Council Meetings, resulting in better informed Councillors and a more efficient and effective governance system.

#### 4.1 Frequency of Concept Forums

Concept Forums will be held on the 2nd Thursday of each month excluding the month of December each year and the month of October every 2nd year (which coincides with ordinary local government elections).

#### 4.2 Subject Matter of Concept Forums

The subject matter for Concept Forums may include:

- a. Discussion on current matters of a local or regional significance.
- b. Discussion on matters relating to the future development of the local government.
- c. Discussion on significant revenue-raising requirements or expenditure needs.
- d. Development of internal strategic, planning, management and financial documents, including the annual budget.
- e. Discussion on governance processes and their effectiveness.
- f. The brainstorming of ideas.
- g. Policy development and direction (but not adoption).
- h. Breaking down of complex issues scheduled to come before Council in the medium to longer term

#### 4.3 Guidelines for the Operation of Concept Forums

- a. Concept Forums are not a decision-making forum. Formal decisions are still to be referred to the Ordinary or Special Council Meeting.
- b. Concept Forums are held behind closed doors (i.e. are not open to the public) and operate in a relatively informal manner. Holding these meetings behind closed doors is justified, as many of the ideas and concepts are preliminary. Privacy and informality will allow Councillors to propose ideas, ask questions and discuss issues for the better understanding of those in attendance.
- c. Concept Forums are to be chaired by the Deputy Shire President. If neither the President nor Deputy President are in attendance, the Councillors present are to elect a Chair for the forum.
- d. To facilitate participation and the exchange of ideas, formal Standing Orders will not apply to Concept Forums.
- e. The Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates and Rule of Conduct Regulations will apply.
- f. Councillors and employees must declare a conflict of interest as they would for a Council or Committee Meeting.
- g. Minutes of Concept Forums are not compiled however the CEO (or his/her delegate) is to ensure that appropriate notes are taken to record the general thrust of discussion – noting again that no decisions are made at Concept Forums. The CEO will ensure notes are distributed to Councillors, noting they are not to be released for public viewing.
- h. Any Councillor items are to be submitted to the CEO no less than five working days prior to the Concept Forum.

- i. The CEO will ensure that the agenda for the Concept Forum is provided to Councillors no later than 5pm the Monday prior to the Concept Forum.

## 5 Risk Management

The risks of not having this Policy in place include:

- a. Council is not able to discuss, introduce and progress strategy within a less restrictive meeting arena.
- b. Council is not able to generate strategic initiative, innovation and thinking across all current and future Council business.
- c. Officers and Council do not collaborate on strategy in any meaningful way.

## 6 Accountabilities and Responsibilities

- a. Council is accountable for:
  - Ensuring the organisation has in place a lawful, transparent, and accountable policy framework, supported by a suite of compliant and appropriate policies and procedures.
  - Endorsing (or not) each organisational policy document in a timely and effective manner.
  - Delegating implementation of each policy document to the CEO.
- b. The CEO is accountable for ensuring the development, implementation, monitoring and review of this policy document, in accord with governing legislation and Council directives.
- c. The Executive Management Team and Managers is responsible for:
  - Ensuring that all employees under their direction comply with this policy document.
  - Enacting process to redress non-compliance with this policy document.
- d. All employees are individually responsible for complying with this policy document.

## 7 Legislation, Policy and Other Related Documents

Act	s.2.7(2)(b) <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> – The council is to determine the local government's policies
Regulation	N/A
Local Law	N/A
Shire Policies	Code of Conduct for Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates
Related Documents	Local Government Operational Guidelines No 5 – Council forums
Related Procedure	N/A

## 8 Administration

Original Adoption Date	26 April 2018
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Last Reviewed	28 April 2022
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