

# About Council Meetings

The following information has been prepared to assist people who wish to attend a Council Meeting in the Town of Narrogin.

## Local Government in Australia

Local Government is the 'third arm' of government in Australia, alongside the state and federal governments.

The Town of Narrogin employs officers to administer its affairs and provide its services. The Council's administration is headed by its Chief Executive Officer.

The Town of Narrogin holds a Council Meeting on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month other than January where there is no meeting and one meeting in December being the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday. Members of the public are welcome at these meetings.

## The Council: Its Purpose and Function

The Council acts like the Board of Directors of a company, determining policies and initiatives and completing the business of the municipal organisation.

## The Meeting

At a Council Meeting, the Elected Members make decisions, state opinions, approve proposals, fulfil the statutory requirements of the Council, approve its budget and expenditure and plan for the future.

Only Elected Members may speak at the meeting, and officers if requested to do so. The agenda includes an opportunity for the Public to submit questions to Council. Please see [Procedures for Public Question Time](#).

Agendas are made available at the meeting. Agendas are also available on the Town of Narrogin website from 5.00pm on the Friday prior to the meeting. Printed copies are available for viewing from Monday at 9.00am prior to the meeting at the administration office and library.

Visitors are requested to observe the rules of decent and quiet behaviour in the gallery.

## Procedures of the Meeting

The Mayor is the Presiding Person at the meeting. The procedure of Council Meetings is laid down by a [local law](#) and an [agenda](#), which lists the order of business for the meetings taken.

The meeting begins at 7.30pm at which the order of business is followed. Minutes of the previous meeting are confirmed, and Elected Members and staff disclose if they have a conflict of interest in any item on the agenda that requires a decision. (By law, Elected Members and staff must identify matters where a conflict of interest exists.)

Matters which require decisions cover issues in the officer's area of responsibility and make recommendations that require a Council decision or policy direction. The Council may resolve to adopt, amend or reject the officer's recommendation, or just note the report, which means no action will be taken.

## **Motions and Amendments**

A proposal being put to the Council is called a motion, and must be moved and seconded by two Elected Members. If another Elected Member wishes to change the motion, he or she may move an amendment to it. This may also be amended, and so on. If an amendment is defeated, another may be moved. When the debate is finished, the amendment is voted on, and if it is carried, it becomes part of the motion, which is then voted on.

At any time during the debate an Elected Member may foreshadow a motion to inform the Council of an intention to move a motion at a later stage in the meeting. A foreshadowed motion will have precedence over any subsequent motion.

## **Points of Order and Divisions**

During the debate, an Elected Member may call a point of order. This is an objection raised on the grounds that a suggested action is not in accordance with proper procedure. The Mayor will rule on this and the Mayor's decision is final.

After a vote has been taken, an Elected Member may call for a division whereby every Councillor must indicate whether they voted for or against the matter. This division is recorded in the minutes of the meeting and only occurs in exceptional circumstances.

## **Decisions Behind Closed Doors**

The Council and its committee meetings are open to the public but the Local Government Act states that certain types of business may be discussed and decisions made behind closed doors. These are matters relating to property sales or purchases, legal issues, staff matters, the personal affairs of individual ratepayers, or any other matter that may be considered confidential. These are usually conducted at the end of the agenda when Council resolves to close the meeting and go behind closed doors. The public will be asked to leave at that time and the doors closed.

## **Public Participation**

There are a number of ways that The Public can have their views heard by Council. See [our page on PUBLIC PARTICIPATION](#).

## **Special Meetings of Council**

A "special" meeting of Council can be convened to consider an urgent matter or a matter which otherwise involves special circumstances. Special meetings can be convened at short notice should the circumstances warrant. If necessary, notice by electronic means or by telephone is acceptable. Special meetings of the Council are conducted in much the same way as ordinary meetings of the Council. Members of the public can ask questions at public question time and a deputation can be made if prior approval is granted. Details can be found in Subdivision 4 of Division 2 Part 5 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

## **Annual General Meeting of Electors**

Section 5.27 of the *Local Government Act 1995* has a requirement to hold an annual general meeting of electors. Such meetings afford members of the public the opportunity to ask Councillors and staff questions about Council matters generally. Resolutions from an annual general meeting of electors must be considered at a subsequent ordinary council meeting. However, such resolutions are in no way binding upon the Council. The Annual General Meeting of Electors notice of meeting is published in the local newspaper and on the website.

## **Special Meeting of Electors**

Special meetings of electors can be convened by residents and/or ratepayers of the municipality (refer s5.28 of the *Local Government Act 1995*). A minimum of 100 electors (or 10% of the electorate, whichever is the lesser number) is required in order to requisition such a meeting. Notice of such meetings must again be advertised in the local press. Electors can put forward Version 6.0 12 and vote on resolutions at special meetings. Meeting minutes must be tabled at the next ordinary council meeting for information and if the Council desires it may adopt and express a position or initiate action in respect of particular resolutions emanating from the meeting. However, resolutions from a special meeting of electors are again in no way binding upon the Council.