

# PUBLIC FORUM APPLICATION FORM AND PROCEDURE

## OVERVIEW

Council holds public forums prior to ordinary meetings of the Council for the purpose of hearing oral submissions from members of the public on items of business to be considered, as per Part 4 of the Model Code of Meeting Practice 2025.

Public forums are held at 7pm on the day of an ordinary meeting of Council, where there are accepted applications, prior to the commencement of the ordinary meeting.

An application can be made to request permission to speak at a public forum on an item of business on the agenda for an ordinary meeting.

### How can I address the Public Forum?

The following requirements apply:

- All parts of the application form must be completed, including the agenda item being spoken on, a statement about the points to be covered and whether the applicant is broadly speaking in favour, or against the item or matter, and a verifiable email address or phone number.
- If there are supporting written, audio and/or visual materials to be presented, and equipment needs, these must be registered through this form. The General Manager may decline such materials.
- Legal representatives must identify their status as a legal representative when applying to speak at the public forum.
- Applicants may apply to speak on no more than 2 items of business on the agenda. A separate application form is required for each item.
- The form must be lodged prior to 12 noon on the day of the relevant ordinary meeting. It can be lodged by email or by delivery to Penrith Civic Centre.
- No more than 2 speakers are permitted to speak in support and 2 speakers against an item. If more than the permitted number of speakers apply, the General Manager may:
  - request the applicants nominate representatives from among themselves;
  - determine representatives from speaker applicants; or,
  - in consultation with the Chair, increase the number of speakers permitted.
- The applicant will receive confirmation by 4pm on the day of the ordinary meeting as to whether their application to speak is accepted. Where an application is not accepted, the reason for this will be provided in writing.

### Please note that:

- Applications to speak at the public forum will be accepted following the release of the business paper for that meeting.
- It is at the discretion of the General Manager or delegate to accept or decline the application to speak at the public forum.
- Each speaker has 5 minutes to address the public forum.
- A councillor may, through the Chair, ask a question of a speaker. Answers by the speaker are limited to one minute for each question. Speakers are under no obligation to answer a question put to them.
- Speakers are not permitted to ask questions of the Council, councillors or council staff.
- Speakers must not digress from the item on the agenda.
- Smart casual dress is the preferred minimum dress standard.
- The public forum is livestreamed and a recording of the forum is published on the Council website. This is a requirement under the Model Code of Meeting Practice. By completing this form, you give consent for yourself to be included in the livestream and recording.
- Speakers do not have absolute privilege (parliamentary privilege). A speaker who makes any potentially offensive or defamatory remarks about any other person may render themselves open to legal action.

- Speakers are advised to obtain their own legal advice about the appropriateness of any material being presented at the forum.
- It is at the discretion of Council to withdraw the opportunity to speak where a speaker fails to respect meeting rules or engages in conduct that could be considered disorderly.

**What is the procedure for speaking at the Public Forum?**

- Approximately 15 minutes before the meeting start time, a Governance officer or delegate will speak to each person who is to speak at the meeting.
- The Chair will call a speaker to the speaking area. When at the speaking area, the speaker should indicate:
  - their name
  - the organisation or group they are representing (if applicable)
  - the issue they will address and the item number of the relevant report in the Business Paper
  - whether they are opposing or supporting the issue/matter (if applicable) and the action they would like Council to take, and
  - their interest in the matter, for example if the matter impacts them directly, indirectly or if they are a spokesperson for others impacted.
- The speaker has 5 minutes to speak on the item as per the written statement they have submitted. The speaker should not use this as opportunity to refute or support points made by previous speakers on the same issue.
- The Chair will indicate if councillors have questions for the speaker.
- The speaker returns to a seat in the audience once the Chair has thanked them.

**PUBLIC FORUM APPLICATION**

Please provide the following details to seek permission to speak at a public forum and email to: council@penrith.city or deliver to: Penrith Civic Centre, 601 High Street Penrith NSW by 12 midday at the latest on the day of the meeting.

Date of meeting:

Item number in the Business Paper:

Title of item in the Business Paper:

I support the recommendation(s)                      Yes                      No

My interest in this matter is (eg. the matter impacts you directly, indirectly or if you are a spokesperson for others impacted):

I would like to register the following supporting materials and/or equipment: *(Please specify)*

*Members of the public are requested to make their representations at a public forum in person, however, may request participation by audio visual link where relevant circumstances exist.*

*I would like to request the following to enable me to participate in this meeting.*

## Personal Details

Name  Surname

Street number  Street name

Suburb  State  Post code

Contact phone number  Email address

By submitting this form I agree to follow the directions of the Chair and understand that should I say anything inappropriate or present any material that is inappropriate, I may be subject to legal action. I acknowledge that I have been advised as above to obtain my own legal advice about the appropriateness of the material I intend to present at the forum.

Yes  No

I will cover the following points in my address: (a separate document may be attached)

### OFFICE USE ONLY

Application Accepted?

Equipment to be provided

Written, audio and/or visual material accepted?

Reasons if application not accepted

#### CONTACT US