



Guide to Council Meetings



Mildura Rural City Council

**Council Meeting Venue:
Committee & Council Room
76 Deakin Ave, Mildura**

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WHO ATTENDS COUNCIL MEETINGS?

Council Meetings are attended by:

- The Mayor – Chairs the meeting;
- Councillors (the elected representatives responsible for making decisions);
- The Chief Executive Officer and General Managers, who provide advice to the Councillors when called upon;
- Other Council officers who may attend meetings from time to time to assist in providing relevant information;
- An officer from the Corporate Administration Branch who records the minutes; and
- Members of the public (Confidential meetings are closed to the public).

WHAT ROLE DOES THE PUBLIC PLAY IN MEETINGS?

Members of the public who attend Council meetings sit in the gallery and must, under our Local Law, remain quiet during the meeting.

Councillors and Council staff will answer questions members of the public submit in writing, as long as they comply with our Local Law. If you would like to ask a question, forms are provided at each Council Meeting. Questions will be answered during 'Public Question Time', held towards the end of the meeting.

WHEN AND WHERE ARE COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD?

Mildura Rural City Council's Ordinary meetings are advertised in the local press and listed on Council's website. They are usually held on the fourth Thursday of the month at Council's Deakin Avenue office on the corner of Ninth Street and Deakin Avenue. A lift is fitted to assist access to the meeting room. An amplification system is in place in the Council chamber.

Special Council meetings are held as advertised.

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HOW IS DEBATE CONDUCTED?

The Agenda can be downloaded from www.mildura.vic.gov.au and this outlines all the matters to be dealt with at the meeting. The items listed on the Agenda are dealt with in the order in which they appear unless a majority, (5 out of 9 Councillors), agrees to change it.

The Mayor will read out the title of each report.

All recommendations must be moved (proposed) by one Councillor and then must be seconded (supported) by another Councillor.

Councillors have an opportunity to ask questions about the recommendations that relate to each report before they make a decision to support or object to it.

The Mayor will ask if there is any opposition to the recommendations which have been moved and seconded. If there is no opposition, the recommendations are adopted.

If a Councillor indicates their opposition to the recommendation then the item must be debated and then put to a vote (see “Process of Conducting a Debate’ flowchart on page 7).

Councillors can;

- Adopt recommendations exactly as they appear on the agenda;
- Amend some or all of the recommendations (which means they are adopted but changed in part);
- Propose an alternative recommendation (an alternative course of action); or
- Defer the decision;

as long as a majority (5 out of 9) Councillors agree.

Debate is conducted according to Council’s “Conduct of Meetings Local Law No 1”. If a Councillor believes that another Councillor is not abiding by the Local Law, they may stand and call a Point of Order. The Mayor will then be required to determine whether the rules of debate are being properly followed. The process of conducting a debate is detailed in the diagram on Page 7.

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WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THE MEETING?

The Agenda follows a similar format every meeting.

- **Declarations of Interest**

If a Councillor has a conflict of interest in any of the reports on the Agenda, they must report the matter at the meeting and will be required to leave the Chamber while a vote is taken on that report. For example, a Councillor will have a conflict of interest if either they or a member of their family will personally benefit from a decision. A 'Disclosure of Interest' form is completed by the Councillor in each case.

- **Prayer & Acknowledgement of Country**

- **Opening and Welcome**

- **Present / Apologies**

The names of any Councillors who are not at the meeting are read out by the Chairperson and officially recorded in the minutes.

- **Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting (which detail what occurred and what was decided at the previous meeting) are confirmed and any amendments are noted.

- **Confirmation of Assembly of Councillors**

In accordance with Section 80A of the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act), records of Assemblies of Councillors must be reported at the next practicable Council meeting and recorded in the minutes.

An assembly of Councillors is defined by the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act), as a meeting at which matters are considered that are intended or likely to be the subject of a Council decision or the exercise of a delegated authority and which is either of the following:

- A meeting of an advisory committee where at least one Councillor is present; or
- A planned or scheduled meeting that includes at least half the Councillors and at least one Council officer.

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- **Notification of Absence**

Councillors make requests for leave of absence that are noted in the minutes.

- **Mayoral Report**

A report outlining the Mayor's official engagements since the last Council meeting is presented, such as attendance at functions or meetings.

- **Councillor Reports**

A report outlining the Councillors engagements since the last Council meeting is presented, such as attendance at functions or meetings.

- **Responses to Councillors Questions**

Formal response to questions taken on notice from previous meetings.

- **Questions From Councillors**

Councillors have the opportunity to ask questions. The Chief Executive Officer will either provide a response or "take the question on notice". The Chief Executive Officer may refer the question to a General Manager for a response.

- **Notices of Motion**

Notices of Motion are generated by Councillors and can relate to any matter within Council's power.

- **Management Reports**

Most of the Agenda consists of reports written by Council officers who recommend that Council takes a particular course of action. The report will provide background information on the issue and explain why the recommendation is being made.

- **Urgent Business**

Some matters arise urgently and cannot be deferred until the next meeting. These matters are dealt with under Urgent Business.

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- **Public Question Time**

Members of the public can address questions to Council in writing as outlined on Page 1 under 'What role does the public play in meetings?'

- **Confidential Business**

Council discusses matters that cannot be disclosed to the public under the Local Government Act, for example confidential contractual or personnel issues. During this time the public are not present in the Chamber.

- **Meeting Closure**

The Mayor closes the meeting.

HOW TO GET ACCESS TO COUNCIL MINUTES

A copy of the minutes can be viewed on Council's website at www.mildura.vic.gov.au or at our Madden Avenue Customer Service Centre and Ouyen Service Centre or by contacting the Governance Branch on telephone number 03 5018 8100. Further information regarding Council meetings can also be obtained on this number.

Process of Conducting a Debate

