

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [OLG BS Office of Local Government Mailbox](#)  
**Cc:** [ARRA Inc](#)  
**Subject:** Model Meeting Code amendments: To the attention of the Office of Local Government's Council Governance Team.  
**Date:** Wednesday, 26 February 2025 1:32:23 PM  
**Attachments:** [Model Meeting Code amendments ARRA\\_26022025.docx](#)  
[Model Meeting Code amendments ARRA\\_26022025.pdf](#)

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To whom it may concern

Please find attached and copied below a submission to this Inquiry from Armidale Regional Ratepayers Association  
Submitted on ARRA's behalf by

[REDACTED]

Description of submitter: Other- concerned community group

Please keep my personal details confidential.

We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this Inquiry.

[REDACTED]

Model Meeting Code amendments

To the attention of the Office of Local Government's Council Governance Team.  
Armidale Regional Ratepayers Association Inc. (ARRA) is a community-based organisation whose objective is to advocate for ratepayers in the Armidale Regional Local Government Area.

ARRA is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this important debate. We envisage a Meeting Code which facilitates Councillors engagement in free and informed public debate to arrive at decisions which reflect the best interests of the community. It is vital that our local community is assured that information gathering and decision making processes are transparent, accessible and reflect due process and that public participation is encouraged and respected.

Before the Meeting The council shall, by resolution, set the frequency, time, date and place of its ordinary meetings.

ARRA recommends consideration be given to ensuring that meeting times are those most likely to encourage community participation i.e after normal business hours.

3.88 The notice and the agenda for, and the business papers relating to, the meeting may be given to councillors in electronic form, unless the council determines otherwise, but only if all councillors have facilities to access the notice, agenda and business papers in that form. ARRA recommends that generally business papers and agendas be provided in electronic form and that any necessary equipment and training be made available and that hard copies be provided on request

Public Forums and Presentations

In the past ARRA have found public pre-meeting briefings by Council to be informative and beneficial, cultivating transparency and confidence in decision-making.

We urge that Councils be encouraged to hold such briefings while ensuring they are not decision-making meetings and except where confidentiality is an issue.

Modes of Address

7.1 Where they can, councillors and staff must stand when the mayor enters the chamber and when addressing the meeting.

Standing for the Mayor (who should be known as the first among equals) on entry and when addressing a meeting is anachronistic, inappropriate and easily subject to ridicule and lends itself to unnecessary Codes of Conduct. Appropriate forms of address should be Mayor and Chair

Mayoral minutes

ARRA urges the retention of:

9.9 A mayoral minute must not be used to put without notice matters that are routine and not urgent or matters for which proper notice should be given because of their complexity. For the purpose of this clause, a matter will be urgent where it requires a decision by the council before the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the council

Decisions of Council

17.12 Subject to clause 17.7, in cases of urgency, a motion to alter or rescind a resolution of the council may be moved at the same meeting at which the resolution was adopted, where: (a) a notice of motion signed by three councillors is submitted to the chairperson at the meeting

ARRA is very concerned at this suggestion which appears to rely on pre-empting decisions made through due process. The current cooling off period is essential for proper governance.

Minimum requirements for minutes

ARRA suggests that 19.2 minimum requirements for minutes include notation of the vote of each Councillor on each agenda item. This simple measure increases the transparency of proceedings and public confidence.

Closure of committee meetings to public

ARRA endorses:

20.20 The general manager must cause business papers for items of business considered during a meeting, or part of a meeting, that is closed to public, to be published on the council's website as soon as practicable after the information contained in the business papers ceases to be confidential.-endorse

ARRA hopes that our recommendations will be seriously considered.

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