

Model Meeting Code Amendments - Online Submission Form : Entry # 12588

1. Your Details

I would like my name and personal details to be treated as confidential:

I consent to my details being shared

Name:

Arthur Bain

Role/Position:

Councillor

Postal Address:

[REDACTED]

Telephone:

[REDACTED]

Email:

[REDACTED]

Which of the following best describes you?

Council Regional

2. Targeted Questions

2.1. Will the proposed amendments made in the consultation draft of the Model Meeting Code achieve the policy outcomes identified in the paper?

Promoting transparency, integrity and public participation

– Removal of pre-meeting briefings will not support good governance – if Councils are using pre-meeting briefings to make decisions, that is a breach of the current code. Pre-meeting briefings provide Councillors with the perspectives they need to make informed decisions in council meetings, if only the Mayor receives the information it is problematic for Councillors to meet their legislated responsibilities.

– I support that confidential information be made public after it ceases to be confidential

– I support the extension of time for recordings to be published.

– I support the points relating to planning decisions, however I believe they already exist in the code.

Promoting the Dignity of the Council Chamber

– I do not support additional Mayoral powers to call an extraordinary meeting without a request – this can be achieved with the support of one other Councillor.

– I do not support the requirement for Councillors to stand when speaking, or when the Mayor enters the chamber – the former amplifies discrimination against disabled Councillors and the latter is outdated and no longer aligns with modern societal values, respect needs to be mutual.

– I support removing the option for councils to reduce the duration of speeches.

– I believe the current code makes clear that decisions must be made in chamber, not in other forums.

– It is inappropriate to equate disorder in the Council Chamber with the rules in the NSW Legislative Chamber, the Legislative Chamber, unlike the Council; Chamber has Parliamentary privilege.

– I do not support additional rules re remote attendance for Councillors, or staff. Currently Councillors need to justify attending by audio-visual link, they should not have any voting rights limited.

– I support restrictions on Council being able to withhold a leave of absence unless by Council resolution.

Depoliticising the role of the general manager

– I support the recommendations regarding GM reports on Notices of Motion and the empowerment of Council to determine

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decisions.

- I support the Mayor ruling on Questions with Notice
- Council determining the attendance of staff at meeting has value, it enables Councillors to have greater oversight of budget priorities and to determine the advice they need.

Simplifying the Model Meeting Code

- Absolutely support removing unnecessary provisions, however that is very subjective.
- Do not support the removal of provisions allowing motions to be foreshadowed
- Support the need to be flexible when facing natural disasters or public health emergencies.

Restricting councils from holding briefing sessions

- Unnecessary – briefings will just be rebranded as workshops.

2.2. Are there any other amendments you would suggest that will achieve these policy outcomes?

- That all Councils provide video and audio coverage of meetings, enabling residents and ratepayers who are unable to attend meetings to observe the decision making process
- I am concerned that having closed pre-meeting briefings after a Public Forum enables GM and staff to undermine the message of speakers at the Public Forum. Staff receive a brief of the speakers' presentation and can compile specific counter arguments, this seems to me to be an "uneven playing field".
- The deterrence against disorder and expulsion from meetings should be by resolution of Council.
- Enable Public Forum speakers on non-agenda items – if there is space. Speakers on agenda items should have priority.
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2.3. Will the proposed amendments have any unintended consequences?

- The ability of Councillors to make informed decisions, disproportionate access to information for Mayor and Councillors.
- Increased discrimination against Councillors with a disability.
- Mandated displays of deference emphasise status over equality.
- Removal of provisions allowing motions to be foreshadowed will restrict the opportunities for Councillors to make better decisions, they need to know the options of supporting or not supporting a proposal.

2.4. Are there any other amendments the Government should consider?

See 2.2

3. General feedback

3.1. Please provide any other feedback on the proposed amendments.

I do not support increasing the powers of the Mayor to expel councillors from meetings for acts of disorder, to be democratic this needs to be by resolution of Council.

Notes



Admin Notification (ID: 66d4f054bfd8)

added February 27, 2025 at 12:38 pm

WordPress successfully passed the notification email to the sending server.