

## Media Release

### New era of transparency for council meetings

**Friday, 29 August 2025**

New rules for council meetings will soon be in place as the Minns Labor Government spearheads a change of culture to boost transparency and community confidence in local government.

A new Model Code of Meeting Practice for local councils has been released today and will come into effect in councils from 1 January 2026.

The changes to the Model Meeting Code are part of the broader set of reforms the Minns Labor Government is progressing to improve confidence, trust and transparency across NSW councils.

Changes to the code have simplified the way meetings are conducted, ensure disorder is dealt with more effectively, that councillors make decisions in full view of the communities they represent, and dignity is returned to council chambers.

All councils will need to adopt a code of meeting practice that contains the mandatory provisions of the updated Model Meeting Code by 31 December 2025.

Key changes to the Model Code of Meeting Practice include:

- Preventing councils from holding private councillor briefing sessions to discuss matters that should be considered in the public domain at committee and council meetings (unless they are confidential)
- Encouraging councils to hold public forums preferably before committee meetings, or if they choose council meetings, to enable community engagement in local matters
- Expanding the powers of the mayor to remove councillors from meetings for acts of disorder
- Expanding the powers of the mayor to remove members of the public if they disrupt council meetings
- Requiring information considered at closed meetings to be made public after it ceases to be confidential
- Requiring councils to give reasons when making decisions on planning matters that depart from staff recommendations (as recommended by ICAC)
- Promoting neutrality in the role of the general manager
- Requiring council and committee meetings to be live streamed to give the community and media access to council decision making, and to require those videos to be public for at least the rest of the council term, or 12 months in the case of a meeting in an election year

The changes to the Meeting Code are part of a broader suite of reforms by the Minns Labor Government to improve conduct and accountability and rebuild public trust in councils.

A new Code of Conduct for councillors is being finalised as well as associated legislative changes, which will see significant changes to how misconduct is dealt with in local government.

**Minister for Local Government Ron Hoenig said:**

“The council chamber should be a place of dignity, where debate and decision making takes place in full view of the community.

“Making decisions on behalf of communities is the very role of a councillor, and all councillors should never lose sight of this core responsibility.

“These changes should ensure that, in a council chamber or committee meeting, mechanisms are in place to prevent the derailing of meetings and overshadowing the important work of local government.

“Council and committee meetings must be effective, transparent and genuine, and strive for outcomes to benefit the community.

“Under the new code, mayors should be given the power to take immediate action against disorderly councillors. This should lessen the need for councils to resort to the broken code of conduct process and instead address misbehaviour immediately in the council chamber.

“I know not everyone will agree with these changes, but most people in this state would agree action is necessary to improve transparency, increase community confidence and faith in local government.

“They will make councillors more visibly in control of their councils to ensure they – as democratically elected representatives of their communities – drive the vision for their local area.”

**MEDIA: Clare Dowswell | Minister Hoenig | 0448 540 073**

The new Model Code of Meeting Practice is available here:

<https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/governance/model-code-of-meeting-practice/model-code-of-meeting-practice-for-local-councils-in-nsw/>

Extensive consultation was undertaken on the proposed changes, all submissions received have been published here: <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/governance/model-code-of-meeting-practice/reforms-to-the-model-code-of-meeting-practice/>