
MR23/003 CODE OF MEETING PRACTICE

File Ref: S012-T00025; S004-T00060

Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council confirm their amendment 23/60:

'Approved speakers at the Public Forum and Public Access must provide a written summary of their address to Council by 12.00noon the business day prior to the meeting via email to council.meetings@esc.nsw.gov.au or hard copy at Council's main office in Moruya or Batemans Bay or Narooma libraries. Speakers are encouraged to provide a written copy of their presentation in full.'

REPORT

Queries have arisen from amendments to the Code of Meeting Practice (COMP) following the Council Meeting on 27 June 2023.

These queries have come from councillors and members of the community. In particular, the clause referring to a requirement to provide information to Council in advance of the Council meeting where a speaker may wish to present.

The General Manager has undertaken a review of the matter and identified administrative errors in the submission summary section of the report to Council of 27 June.

These related to part of a staff submission. A further error was identified in advice provided at the Council Meeting related to wording in a clause within the document placed on public exhibition.

The General Manager has apologised for these errors and I appreciate his prompt response and his assurance that measures have been put in place to avoid mistakes like these in future.

At our meeting of 27 June 2023, and thanks to careful reading of the documents by councillors, debate arose about the proposed change of the wording.

Information was supplied by staff to the Governance Manager regarding the wording of the draft clause. This resulted in Council being informed that the word 'must' was in the exhibited draft.

That information was incorrect. The clause in the February 2023 exhibition draft contained the word 'encouraged'.

The change from the exhibited draft to the final draft arose from a staff submission by the Governance Manager on 6 April 2023, that recommended amendments to the draft clause, "*Approved speakers must provide written copy of their address to Council by 12 noon the business day prior.*"

The intent of that proposed amendment was to ensure awareness of the topic a speaker wished to present to Council and, if possible, allow councillors and staff an opportunity to research the background of the matter to enable a better informed discussion to take place.

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The clause was debated and addressed, via an amendment, where Councillors resolved that:
23/60 AMENDMENT Councillor Schutz/Councillor Diskon THAT Council amend point 3.4 in the Code of Meeting Practice to read:

'Approved speakers at the Public Forum must provide a written summary of their address to Council by 12.00noon the business day prior to the meeting via email to council.meetings@esc.nsw.gov.au or hard copy at Council's main office in Moruya or Batemans Bay or Narooma libraries. Speakers are encouraged to provide a written copy of their presentation in full.'

Due to the administrative error in the report and the incorrect advice on the day, I think it worthwhile for Council to re-confirm the decision to amend that clause to make sure councillors and the community have a clear view of the issue.

It is also an opportunity to discuss applying the same requirement to Public Access, and to note that any member of the community who requires support to submit a written summary of their presentation will receive that support, as has always been the case, from Council's executive services staff.

Council note that members of the community who require support to submit a written summary of their presentation will be supported by Council's executive services staff to do so.