

COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEMBERS ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set a consistent and transparent approach to the management of Council and Committee Member attendance at Meetings by electronic means.

Definitions

The **Act** means the *Local Government Act 1995*.

CEO means Chief Executive Officer.

Council Member means a person who is currently serving a term of office as an elected official of the Council in accordance with the Act.

Committee Member means a person who is either a Council Member or an independent person appointed by Council to a Committee of Council.

Meeting means –

- (a) an ordinary meeting of the council; or
- (b) a special meeting of the council; or
- (c) a meeting of a committee of the council.

Member means a Council Member and/or Committee Member.

The **Regulations** means the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*.

Policy Statement

The Regulations allow Members to attend Meetings electronically, supporting continuity in governance and decision-making.

1. Request for electronic attendance by a Member

A Member can only attend a meeting electronically if they have been authorised to do so by the Mayor or Council.

A request for electronic attendance should be made in writing (via email or Microsoft Teams) to the Mayor at least 24 hours prior to the meeting, with a copy provided to the CEO.

The mayor may approve a shorter notice period after consulting the CEO.

2. 50% Cap for Members

The Mayor or Council cannot authorise a Member to attend a meeting by electronic means where it would result in the Member attending more than half of the Meetings in the previous 12 months by this method.

Each meeting type is considered separately when calculating the 50% cap, i.e. electronic attendance at Ordinary Council Meetings does not count towards the 50% cap of electronic attendance at Special Council Meetings or committee meetings.

The minutes of the Meeting will note if a Member has attended the meeting by electronic means, and the CEO will ensure appropriate records are kept for the purpose of monitoring the 50% cap.

3. Approval to conduct an electronic meeting

Outside of an emergency, only Council can authorise an electronic Meeting following consultation with the CEO. Council cannot authorise an electronic Meeting where it would result in more than half of the Meetings in the previous 12 months being held by this method.

Each meeting type is considered separately when calculating the 50% cap of electronic Meetings.

Where a Meeting is conducted by electronic means, the City must:

- (a) provide public notice that an electronic Meeting is being held;
- (b) live-stream the Meeting; and
- (c) allow public questions to be submitted prior to the Meeting.

4. Location

A Member attending by electronic means must do so from a physical location that is quiet and private, so they can effectively engage in deliberations and communications during the meeting and protect the confidentiality of discussions and content.

5. Technology and equipment

The City's primary form of electronic communication for meetings is Microsoft Teams. The CEO may vary the electronic communication method as circumstances require.

Members will use a video camera so that they can be seen by the Mayor and other Members. They will seek the Mayor's permission before turning off the camera.

Where a video camera is unavailable, the Member may seek permission from the Mayor or Presiding Member to attend the Meeting using audio only.

In all cases, the Mayor or Council, will consult with the CEO prior to approving electronic attendance at Meetings to ensure logistics and equipment are available and operational.

6. Meeting conduct

During the Meeting, the Member attending by electronic means will:

- (a) advise the Mayor or Presiding Member if they intend to leave the Meeting or if they return to the Meeting.
- (b) during confidential sessions, confirm to the Mayor or Presiding Member that they are alone, and no unauthorised person is in attendance.
- (c) provide a clear verbal or visual response (such as raising a hand) to confirm their vote for or against a resolution.
- (d) when leaving the room due to a conflict of interest, turn off the camera and speaker, and await a phone call or digital message (eg text or MS Teams message) from the CEO or the CEO's delegate, who will advise when to rejoin the Meeting.

Related Documents

Legislation & Local Laws	<i>Local Government Act 1995, s.5.25(1)(ba)</i> <i>Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996, r.14C, 14CA, and 14D</i> <i>City of Karratha Standing Orders Local Law 2018</i>
Relevant Delegations	Nil

Electronic Attendance at Meetings

Strategies & Plans	Nil
Related Council Policies	Nil
Procedures, Documents & Forms	Nil

Policy Owner

Directorate	Corporate Services
Department	Governance

Review Management

Next review due: 2031

Version Management

Version	Date	Council Resolution Number	Description
1.0	July 2024	OCM240729-13	Original Policy Adopted
2.0	August 2026	OCM260824-06	Policy review