



# **COUNCIL POLICY 4.4**

## **Elected Member (Councillor)**

### **Teleconferencing Policy**

Version: V1 – 24/6/18

#### **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this policy is to set out the approval process and the acceptable situations when a Councillor might teleconference at a Council meeting.

The policy covers the Mayor and Councillors teleconferencing to an ordinary or special meeting of the Council.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Local Government Regulation has a provision that provides Council with the ability to allow a person to take part in a Council meeting via teleconferencing. That provision is in accordance with section 276 of the Local Government Regulation 2012, as follows:

##### **276 Teleconferencing**

1. *Teleconferencing is the use of a telephone, video conferencing equipment or other means of instant communication that allows a person to take part in discussions as they happen.*
2. *A local government may allow a person to take part in a meeting by teleconferencing.*
3. *A councillor taking part in a meeting by teleconferencing is taken to have attended the meeting if—*
  - a. *the councillor was simultaneously in audio contact with each other person at the meeting; and*
  - b. *the local government approved the teleconferencing arrangement*

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

##### **APPROVAL**

Council approval of a teleconference arrangement will be by a resolution of Council. This resolution will be made at the commencement of the meeting.

Council is not obliged to approve a teleconference arrangement and will consider the reason for the request. Council will only approve a teleconference arrangement where the Councillor has an extraordinary issue that prevents the Councillor from attending the Council meeting in person.

If the Council does not approve the teleconferencing arrangement the Councillor should apply for a leave of absence if they are unable to attend the meeting in person. Council is not obliged to provide a leave of absence and will consider the reason for non-attendance before resolving an approval of a leave of absence.

A Councillor's past record of attendance may be considered by Council as a reason not to provide an approval for teleconferencing.

Continued requests by a Councillor to take part in a Council meeting by teleconferencing, unless there is an extraordinary issue, will be considered by the Council and Mayor as inappropriate conduct.

## **RECORDING OF TELECONFERENCING**

Where Council has approved a Councillor to take part in a Council meeting via teleconferencing the resolution and the name of the Councillor taking part by teleconference will form part of the minutes. Attendance by teleconferencing will also be noted against the Councillors meeting records placed in the annual report.

Severance of audio contact should be minuted in the meeting minutes as if the Councillor left the Council meeting if attending in person.

## **PARTICIPATION**

A Councillor who is taking part in a Council meeting through teleconferencing must ensure that they have access to consistent audio contact with the Council meeting and locate themselves in an appropriate area.

If the Council resolves to go into closed session during a meeting the Councillor who is taking part in the meeting by teleconferencing should ensure that all matters of confidentiality can be guaranteed. If the Councillor cannot guarantee confidentiality of matters discussed during a closed session of Council the Councillor should refrain from taking part in that session and sever the communication until after the closed session of Council is completed.

The Councillor must not leave the audio contact with Council unattended at any time during the Council meeting. Should the Councillor need to leave audio contact during the meeting the Councillor should sever the contact and reconnect when convenient. This severance will be minuted.

## **EXTRAORDINARY ISSUE**

Examples of extraordinary issues

- The Council has called an emergent special meeting to resolve an urgent matter. This is where the issue is so urgent that the 2 days meeting notice has been waived.
- Ill health of the Councillor that prevents meeting attendance in persons or being a carer for a dependent where a doctor has required the Councillor undertake caring duties that prevents meeting attendance.
- The Council meeting is held on the day of a family funeral and the Councillor is unable to attend the Council meeting.
- The Councillor is away from the Shire and unable to return due to a disaster or poor weather.
- Council has required the Councillor to attend a meeting or conference away from the Shire and logistically cannot return to attend the Council meeting.

## **RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

- *Local Government Regulation 2012*

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version	Resolution Date	Resolution No.	Policy Author
V1	18 June 2024	24/6/18	CEO

This Policy is to remain in force until otherwise amended/replaced by resolution of the Council.

Review Frequency: 2 yearly