



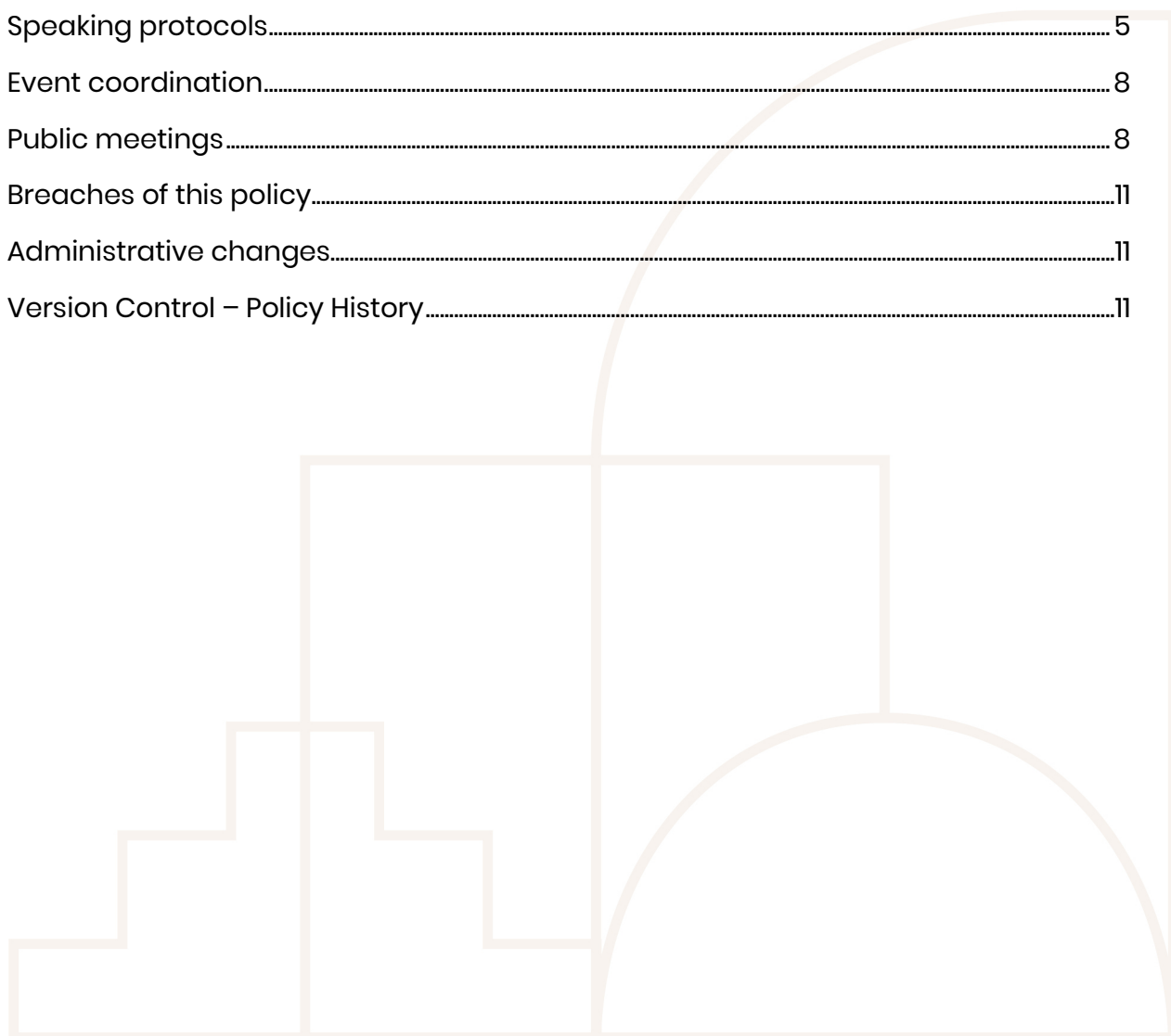
Event Invitation, Speaking and Public Meeting Policy

Version 2 – 2022

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| Title | Event invitation, speaking and public meeting policy |
| Summary | The Policy outlines the required process for managing notifications, invitations, communications and speakers in the coordination of Council events, programs, activities and public meetings. |
| Document Type | Policy |
| Relevant Strategic Plan Objective | Strategic Direction 5: Progressive, responsive and effective civic leadership |
| Legislative Reference | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> • <i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act)</i> |
| Related Council Documents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model Code of Conduct • Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country Guidelines |
| Version Control | See last page |

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1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect and enhance the reputation of Council
- Maintain and maximise positive relationships with the community
- Establish a consistent approach to managing notifications, invitations, communications and speakers in the coordination of Council events, programs, activities and public meetings

2 Scope

This policy applies to all Inner West Council Officers, Councillors, contractors working for Council regardless of whether they are permanent, temporary, full-time, part-time or casual and volunteers and includes all Council managed events, programs, activities and public meetings.

In some cases, it is possible that not all requirements regarding notifications, invitations, communications and speakers may apply. In these instances, decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the General Manager and relevant Director.

3 Definitions

In the Event Invitation, Speaking and Public Meeting Policy, the following terms have the following meanings:

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|------------------------|---|
| Councillor | Inner West Council elected representative |
| Council Officer | Inner West Council members of staff (including full-time, part-time, casual and contracted staff) |
| Act | <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> |
| Regulation | <i>Local Government Regulation (General) 2020</i> |

4 Event notification and invitations

4.1 Notifications to Mayor and Councillors

The Mayor and Councillors should be notified of any Council events where more than 50 people are expected to attend and/or is of public or political significance. This should be done as far in advance as possible.

Council staff should follow current operational procedures to ensure the Mayor and Councillors are informed and that Councillor Support are advised so the event is included in the Councillor events calendar.

Council's Communications staff will include a listing of events organised by Council staff in the fortnightly email update to Councillors and a link to the public events in the What's On Calendar on Council's external website.

4.2 Invitations and communication requirements

The event organiser is responsible for compiling the invitation list and sending invitations to internal and external stakeholders.

Invitations to all significant public events, meetings, openings and consultations should come from the Mayor as official Council spokesperson. Smaller scale events and routine meetings are exempt from this requirement. At their discretion, the Mayor and/or General Manager can nominate other Council officials to issue event invitations, such as Directors and Senior Managers.

The event organiser should follow current operational procedures the Mayor and Councillor events, engagement and communication procedure to draft the invitation and obtain approval to send from the Strategic & Corporate Communications team and the General Manager / relevant Director..

The event organiser should provide information to the Strategic & Corporate Communications team who will coordinate promotional activity through Council's communication channels.

When approval has been received, the event organiser should upload the event to the What's On section of Council's external website and notify relevant stakeholders/networks.

5 Speaking protocols

5.1 Official spokespeople

The Mayor and General Manager are Council's official spokespeople on all matters. At their discretion, the Mayor and General Manager can nominate other Council officers to act as a Council spokesperson, such as Councillors or senior staff.

Council officers can speak at small scale or low profile events with their manager's approval.

5.2 Government representatives

Depending on the nature and size of the event, it may be appropriate to invite the relevant State and Federal Members of Parliament of the electorate in which the event

is being held (see <http://www.aec.gov.au/profiles/nsw/> and [Electoral districts redistribution – NSW Electoral Commission](#)).

Invitations to Members of Parliament to attend and/or speak will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the Mayor and/or General Manager.

When approval is given by the Mayor or General Manager for a politician to speak or attend, then appropriate protocol must be adhered to.

Members of Parliament must be correctly addressed with their title and salutation, whether the correspondence is formal (e.g., letter) or informal (e.g. email). See [How to address Senators and Members – Parliament of Australia \(aph.gov.au\)](#).

The number of speakers for an event should be kept to a minimum and be tailored to the needs of the event. An invitation to attend an event does not always include an invitation to speak at the event.

If significant funding /investment was allocated to an event or initiative by a State or Federal Government Department the relevant Minister, local member or their delegate should be invited to speak at the event. Organisers must discuss these invitations with the relevant Director or the General Manager. Some State and Federal grants may require the involvement of multiple Members of Parliament; this information will be set out in the grant contract.

Government representatives can also be invited to speak and/or answer questions at events/public meetings for example when a major infrastructure development is being announced.

Requests to speak from external parties should be considered on their merit by the relevant Director or General Manager. The speaking order for invited guests is based on seniority/importance to the event:

- International
- Federal
- State then
- Local

For further information read *The Table of Precedence NSW* in: [Protocol in NSW Government – Premier & Cabinet](#)

Regardless of whether they are speaking or not, all government officials and senior representatives must be officially acknowledged by the event's Master of Ceremonies at the commencement of proceedings, This includes all Councillors in attendance.

Only the Master of Ceremonies should welcome special guests.

5.3 Council staff

Staff must seek approval from their manager prior to speaking at any Council event and should only speak publicly about their area of expertise.

Staff are reminded that when attending events, they are representing Inner West Council and their behaviour should reflect Council's values.

5.4 Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country

Traditional Custodians

The Traditional Custodians of the Inner West are the Gadigal and Wangal peoples.

Gadigal people

The Gadigal people stretched along the south side of Port Jackson from South Head to Petersham.

Wangal people

The Wangal people occupied the area along the southern shore of the Parramatta River from Petersham to Rosehill.

How to Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians

There are two ways in which Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Inner West. A Welcome to Country provides a statement of welcome, comfort and safety for visitors from another country or area onto the country the event is being held and to the community. A Welcome to Country is appropriate for all major events.

A Welcome to Country can only be given by an Elder of the local Aboriginal community unless permission is given by the Elder for another member of the community to give the Welcome.

The Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Lands Council should be invited to undertake a Welcome to Country for at least two significant Council events per year. Suitable events include the Mayoral Election and 26 January Citizenship.

Another way to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians is by performing an Acknowledgement of Country. An Acknowledgement of Country can be given by any person.

Acknowledgement of Country must acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or country where the meeting is taking place. It also should be done with dignity and respect. An example of an Acknowledgement of Country is:

I acknowledge that we are meeting on the land of the Gadigal and Wangal peoples. I pay my respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

6 Event coordination

Community events that do not fall within Council's major events program are the responsibility of the relevant section of Council. The Director of the section hosting the event should ensure that the event being organised by their team complies with this policy and with the Mayor and Councillor events, engagement and communication protocol.

Council's Events team can provide guidance on event organisation for small scale events.

Event organisers must consider accessibility issues and refer to the Accessible Events Guide.

6.1 Follow up and communications after events

Following an event, Council staff should forward photographs taken during the event of Councillors, staff and guests to the Strategic & Corporate Communications team for use in promotional materials.

Any photographs featuring members of the community aged under 18 years old must include a signed waiver from a parent or guardian (Photo Consent form is on the intranet) allowing Council to store and use their image.

7 Public meetings

Public meetings are scheduled by resolution of Council to address a topic of interest to the community. Public meetings where 50 or more members of the public are expected to attend are subject to this policy.

7.1 Purpose of meeting

The purpose of public meetings should be clearly defined. Unless otherwise resolved by Council the main reason to hold a public meeting is to share information. The topic of public meetings must be clearly defined. Councillors, Council officers (usually Directors or Senior Managers) must be in attendance to provide information on an issue and to answer questions.

Public meetings should include a call to action where possible. They are an opportunity for Council to inform the community on an issue but are not an opportunity to resolve recommendations or vote on issues.

7.2 Chair or Master of Ceremonies

The chair or master of ceremonies for a Council-run public meeting is the Mayor or General Manager as Council's official spokespeople. The Mayor and General Manager can nominate other Council officials to act as the chair or master of ceremonies including, Councillors or Directors.

7.3 Speakers

Council-approved public meetings must allow for Councillors (at minimum ward Councillors) to speak. Ward Councillors should be allocated a time to speak as part of the official proceedings. The length of meeting cannot be used as a reason to exclude Councillor participation.

Only speakers who are on the official agenda are permitted to speak. Council may resolve to invite community groups, experts or State or Federal members/representatives to a short speaking spot in the agenda.

Council must protect public meetings from being, or appearing to be, party political.

7.4 Notification and promotion

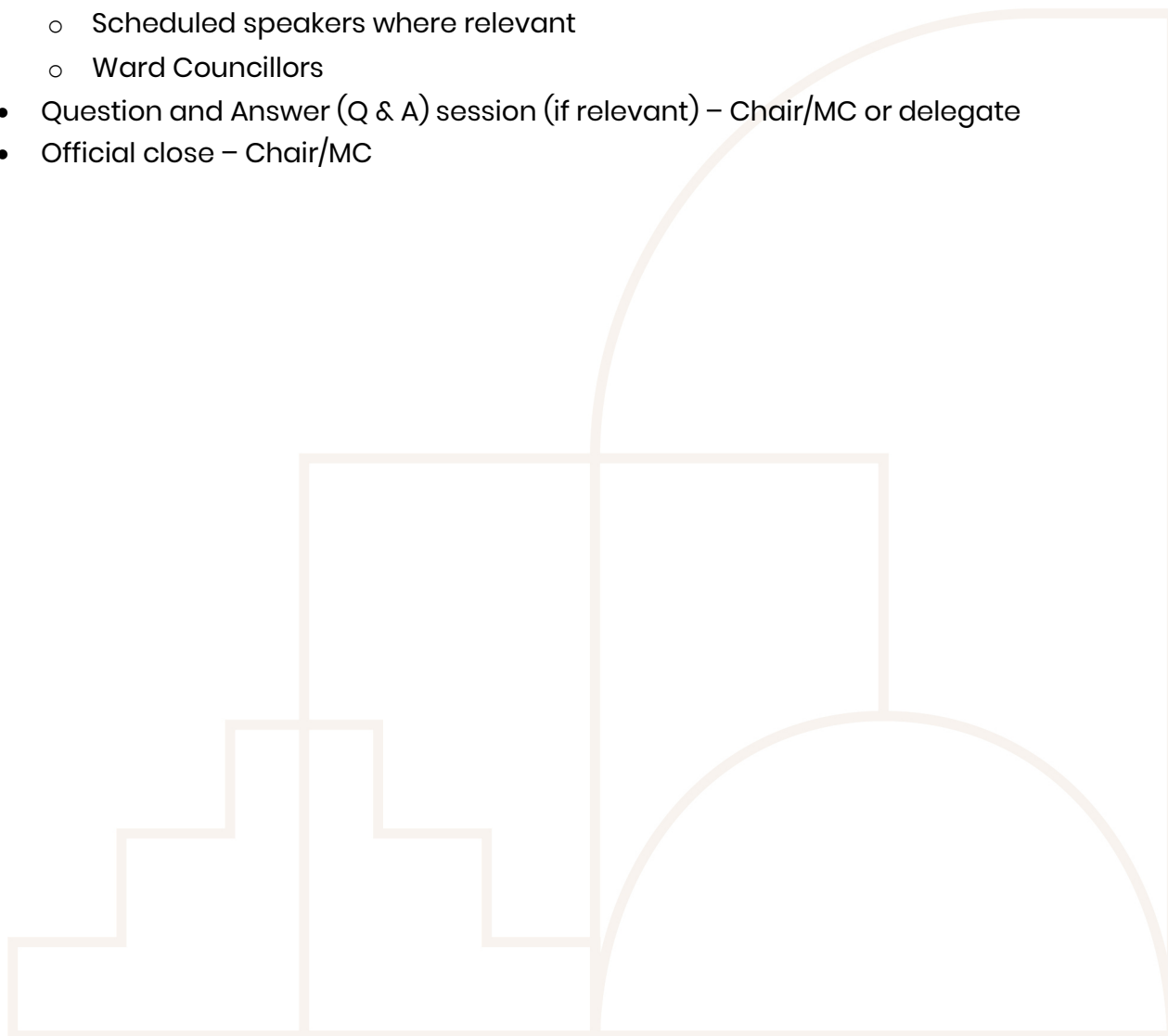
Councillors are notified of public meetings in accordance with this policy and meetings must be included in the Councillor Events Calendar.

Residents are notified through an invitation letter, generally from the Mayor to residences in the area relevant to the meeting topic, and through Council's communication channels. Businesses, community groups and non-resident ratepayers can also be invited where relevant.

7.5 Format of meeting

A typical format for Council-run public meetings is:

- Official welcome including acknowledgement of Country – Chair/MC
- Housekeeping (emergency evacuation information, toilet location)
- Speakers:
 - Council presentation
 - Scheduled speakers where relevant
 - Ward Councillors
- Question and Answer (Q & A) session (if relevant) – Chair/MC or delegate
- Official close – Chair/MC



8 Breaches of this policy

Breaches of this policy may result in an investigation of the alleged breach in line with relevant Council policies including the Model Code of Conduct.

Any alleged criminal offence or allegation of corrupt conduct will be referred to the relevant external agency.

9 Administrative changes

From time-to-time circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, including branding, Council Officer titles or department changes and legislative name or title changes, these are considered minor in nature and not required to be formally readopted.

10 Version Control – Policy History

This policy will be formally reviewed every three years from the date of adoption or as required.

Governance use only:

| Document | Event Invitation, Speaking and Public Meeting Policy | <i>Uncontrolled Copy When Printed</i> | |
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| Custodian | Corporate Strategy & Engagement Manager | Version # | Version 2 |
| Approved By | Council | ECM Document # | 36946793 |
| Next Review Date | 2025 | | |

| Amended by | Changes made | Date |
|---|-----------------|--------------|
| Council | New policy | 2018 |
| Corporate Strategy & Engagement Manager | Policy reviewed | October 2022 |