



### Informal Gatherings Policy

<b>Strategic Reference</b>	Provide leadership, good governance, and efficient, effective and responsive Council services
<b>File Reference</b>	
<b>Responsible Department</b>	Chief Executive Officer
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<b>Revision Dates</b>	Next periodic election
<b>Relevant Delegations</b>	
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	<i>Code of Conduct for Council Members</i> <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> <i>Local Government (General) Regulations 2013</i> <i>Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations 2013</i>
<b>Relevant Policies</b>	
<b>Relevant Procedures</b>	Code of Practice, Formal Proceedings for Council & Committee Meetings

#### 1. Introduction

Informal gatherings provide a valuable opportunity to enhance the decision-making processes of councils, by providing opportunities for council members to become better informed on issues and seek further clarification on matters.

Sections 90(8) and (8a) of the *Local Government Act 1999* ("the Act") operate to enable the District Council of Yankalilla ("the Council") to lawfully hold informal gatherings of Council Members (or Committee members), with or without Council employees, provided that:

- any matters discussed relating to a matter that would ordinarily form part of the agenda for a formal meeting of the Council or a Council committee are not dealt with in such a way as to obtain, or effectively obtain a decision; and
- the Council has adopted a policy on the holding of informal gatherings; and
- the informal gathering complies with the policy.

## **2. Purpose and Scope**

This Policy is adopted pursuant to section 90(8a) of the Act and is intended to outline the purpose of, and the basis upon which, the Council will apply the provisions of s90(8) of the Act regarding informal gatherings.

This Policy applies to all informal gatherings that:

- involve a quorum of the Council (or Committee members), regardless of whether Council employees are in attendance; and
- involves discussion or consideration of any matter that would ordinarily form part of the agenda for a formal meeting of Council or Council Committee; and
- is approved by the Chief Executive Officer (“the CEO”) (or delegate).

## **3. Definition of Informal Gatherings**

A ‘designated informal gathering or discussion’ is an event organised and conducted by or on behalf of a council or CEO to which members (of the council or a committee) have been invited and involves discussion of a matter that is, or is intended to be, part of the agenda for a formal council or committee meeting.

## **4. Policy Statement**

Council will, on occasion, hold informal gatherings involving Council Members or members of Council Committees. The CEO will be responsible for determining who is invited to attend an informal gathering.

Informal gatherings and discussions will be used solely for the purpose of information sharing and not for the purpose of debating issues, building consensus positions or otherwise discharging the Council’s deliberative and decision-making functions.

The CEO and Council Members are responsible for ensuring informal gatherings and discussions are conducted in accordance with the Act.

The types of informal gatherings that may be convened by the CEO include, but are not limited to:

- planning sessions associated with the development of policies or strategies;
- briefing/consultation sessions;
- workshops/training/conferences/seminars;
- training sessions; or
- social gatherings or events to encourage informal communication between Council Members (or Committee members); or between Council Members (or Committee members) and Council employees.

Informal gatherings or discussions to be held at a place open to the public, unless the informal gathering or discussion is one that the council or CEO has declared may be held in confidence; and

That the council or CEO will only declare that a 'designated informal gathering or discussion' may be held in confidence;

- on a case by case basis; and
- if the 'designated informal gathering or discussion' is a planning session of a general or strategic nature or is a briefing relating to information or a matter of a confidential nature within the ambit of section 90(3) of the Act;

Informal gatherings will not involve a formal minute taking process. However, a list of the matters to be discussed at an informal gathering will be published on the Council's website as appropriate, detailing the place, date and time; the matter that is to be discussed; whether it is open to the public and the reason if it is to be held in confidence

Council Members and members of Council Committees will not convene or otherwise participate in informal gatherings outside of this Policy.

## **5. Further Information**

A copy of this Policy is available for inspection by members of the public at the offices of Council during ordinary business hours. Alternatively, the public may obtain a copy for a fee fixed by Council, or copies are available to be downloaded free of charge from the Council's internet site [www.yankalilla.sa.gov.au](http://www.yankalilla.sa.gov.au)

Further enquiries in relation to the policy should be directed to the CEO, or telephone (08) 8558 0200 or by email to [council@yankalilla.sa.gov.au](mailto:council@yankalilla.sa.gov.au).