

EME035		ELECTED MEMBERS - ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS	
POLICY OWNER:	Shire of Carnarvon		
DEPARTMENT:	Office of the CEO		
CREATION DATE:	15 December 2023	REVIEW SCHEDULE:	Annual
RELATED PROCEDURES:			
RELATED FORMS:			
RELATED DELEGATIONS:			
RELATED POLICIES:	EME001 Code of Conduct for Elected Members, Committee Members and Candidates		
LEGISLATION:	- r.14C-r14E Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 - s3. Disability Services Act 1993		
DOCUMENT CONTROL			
DATE REVIEWED:	REVIEWED BY:	CHANGES (IF ANY):	APPROVED BY COUNCIL:
15 December 2023	CEO	New Policy	OCM09/01/24
25/06/2024	Council	Nil	OCM 04/06/24

EME035 Elected Members Electronic Attendance at Meetings

OBJECTIVE

This Policy establishes guidelines and expectations for requests for electronic attendance at meetings of Council and Committee members attending meetings electronically in relation to equipment and location.

POLICY STATEMENT/S

Meetings Held by Electronic Means

Meetings may be held by electronic means in accordance with Regulation 14D(2) of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*.

Under the Regulations, Council cannot authorise a meeting to be held under sub regulation (2)(c) if holding the proposed meeting under that authorisation would result in more than half of the meetings (including the proposed meeting) of the council or committee, in the relevant period, being held under an authorisation under sub regulation (2)(C).

Council must have regard to whether the location from which each Member attends the meeting via electronic means and the equipment the member intends to use to attend the meeting are deemed suitable for the member to be able to effectively engage in deliberations and communications during the meeting. Suitable locations and equipment are designated by the provisions of this Policy.

Requests for Electronic Attendance at Meetings



Requests for electronic attendance at briefings and workshops are not legislated and are therefore covered by this Policy. If a Member intends to attend an unlegislated meeting such as a briefing or workshop electronically, they do not need to ask for permission, but should advise the CEO's office at their earliest convenience to ensure the appropriate videoconferencing equipment is made available and tested prior to the meeting.

Under the Regulations, the Shire President or Council can authorise electronic attendance. In the case of the President needing to attend electronically, the authorisation can be provided by the Deputy Shire President.

Requests for electronic attendance should be made preferably two business days prior to the meeting, briefing or workshop for which electronic attendance is being requested.

All requests for electronic attendance should specify the location from which the Member wishes to attend the meeting and the equipment the member intends to use to attend the meeting.

Requests for electronic attendance at Ordinary Council Meetings are to be made by email to the Shire President and copied to the CEO, as early as possible, so that the application may be considered, and arrangements made to accommodate the request, if approval is given.

Requests for electronic attendance at Committee Meetings are to be made by email to the Shire President and copied to the Committee Chairperson and the CEO, as early as possible, so that the application and arrangements made to accommodate the request can be considered and implemented if approved by the President or Presiding Member.

Should the application for electronic attendance at a meeting meet the requirements for approval as specified in this policy, and approval for electronic attendance is denied by the Shire President, or in the case of the President by the Deputy Shire President, the Member will not be admitted to the meeting.

Requirements for Approval

There is no limit to the number of meetings that can be attended electronically due to a public health emergency, state of emergency or natural disaster (Regulation 14(2)(a)).

For Ordinary Council Meetings, Special Council Meetings and Committee Meetings, the Member's electronic attendance at the proposed meeting under r14(2)(b) of the Regulations must not result in the member attending more than half of the meetings (including the proposed meeting) of the Council or Committee in the relevant period under an authorisation under r14(2)(b) of the Regulations. This cap does not apply to a member who is a person with a disability as defined in s3 of the Disability Services Act 1993.

There is no cap on electronic attendance for Agenda Briefing, Corporate Information Sessions, and other briefings and workshops, however physical presence is encouraged, particularly for meetings that require a high level of collaboration and involvement.

The CEO's office will record electronic attendance on the Attendance register and will formally advise the Council on the number of meetings the requester has attended via means to ensure compliance under Regulation 14C(2)(b).



In approving the request, the Council must have regard to whether the location from which the member wishes to attend the meeting and the equipment the member intends to use to attend the meeting are deemed suitable for the member to be able to effectively engage in deliberations and communications during the meeting, in line with the provisions of this Policy.

Suitable Locations

1. Locations within Australia and its Territories are suitable for electronic attendance.
2. Due to increased cyber security risks with overseas communications networks, attendance from international locations will not be supported. However, in exceptional circumstance, attendance from overseas from secure connections may be approved per request to the Shire of Carnarvon management team at which time our ICT provider will whitelist the IP address from the origin country, subject to the internet connection being secured (not public WIFI).
4. If other people are present at the location at the time of the meeting, the member must be able to close a door in order or take other measures required to minimise noise and maintain privacy

Electronic Means

1. The electronic means for all electronic meetings will be set up by the CEO's office, using a software or web-based application approved for use by the Shire.
2. CEO's office will include the details of how to connect to all meetings electronically on the Outlook calendar invite for that meeting.

Suitable Networks and Equipment

1. Members attending meetings electronically must connect through a suitable network and using suitable equipment.
2. Suitable networks include private home internet and WIFI, or a mobile hotspot from a trusted personal mobile device.
3. Due to increased cyber security risks, public WIFI is not considered to be a suitable connection for electronic attendance (this includes connections at cafes, airports, hotels, and restaurants).
4. Suitable equipment for attending electronic meetings includes Shire provided devices (e.g. tablet or laptop) or a personal computer or laptop with a video camera.

Maintaining Confidentiality During the Meeting

1. If the meeting or part of the meeting for which a member is attending electronically is to be closed to the public, the member must make a declaration that they can maintain confidentiality during the meeting or the closed part of the meeting (as the case requires).
2. This declaration must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and should be worded as follows: "I [Member Name], declare that I am able to maintain confidentiality during the closed part of this meeting. If I am no longer able to maintain confidentiality, I will excuse myself from the meeting."
3. Should the member make the above declaration and subsequently cannot maintain confidentiality;



they must leave the meeting or the closed part of the meeting.

4. The declaration is to be made before the meeting goes behind closed doors.

5. Clauses 1 – 4 above apply to all attendees of meetings where the entire meeting is held by electronic means.

DEFINITIONS

Briefing means a briefing session of Council or an Agenda Briefing for an Ordinary Council Meeting.

Meeting means an Ordinary Council Meeting, Special Council Meeting, or Committee Meeting (including the Audit and Risk Committee) of the Shire of Carnarvon.

Natural Disaster State Planning Policy No. 3.4 Natural Hazards and Disasters 1. This policy applies to the planning and development of land that may be affected by natural disasters and hazards. It defines natural disasters as “rapid on-set events”. The policy also lists the natural disasters that Western Australia is subject to, including floods, cyclones, storm surge, severe storms, landslide, bush fires and earthquakes.

Relevant period means the period of 12 months ending on the day on which the proposed meeting is to be held.

Regulation means a regulation under the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*.