

ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set a consistent and transparent approach to the management of Council 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 member of the Council in accordance with the Act.

Committee Member means a person who is a Council Member who has been appointed by Council to a Committee of Council, or an independent person appointed by Council to the Audit and Organisational Risk 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 the Audit and Organisational Risk Committee of council; or
- (d) Any 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

Occasionally Council Members and Committee Members may need to attend a meeting by electronic means.

Flexibility may be a necessity where travel, family responsibilities, and other personal events affect a Member's ability to attend a meeting in-person.

The City of Karratha also benefits by ensuring continuity of good governance and decision making.

1. Request for electronic attendance by a Member

A Member may only attend a meeting electronically if they have been authorised to do so by the Mayor, Presiding Member, or council.

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

The Mayor or Presiding Member may approve a shorter notice period after consulting the CEO.

The CEO or Council minute secretary will provide the Member with a meeting invitation that includes instructions for attending the meeting remotely.

2. Approval to conduct an electronic meeting

Council may choose to hold a meeting electronically after consulting the CEO.

Outside of an emergency only council may authorise an electronic meeting, and will ensure:

- (a) sufficient public notice is provided; and
- (b) public participation in the meeting is facilitated

3. Location

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

4. Technology and equipment

The City's primary form electronic communication for meeting is Microsoft Teams. The Chief Executive Officer may vary the electronic communication method as circumstances require.

It is also preferred that the Member will use a video camera so that they can be seen by the Mayor or Presiding Member and other Council 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 Presiding Member, or Council, will consult with the CEO prior to approving electronic attendance at meetings to ensure logistics and equipment are available and operational.

5. Meeting conduct

During the meeting, the Member attending remotely will:

- (a) advise the Mayor or Presiding Member if they leave the meeting or return to the meeting.
- (b) during in-camera 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 from the CEO who will advise when to rejoin the meeting.

6. 50% Cap

A person may only attend a meeting remotely by electronic means, provided they have not attended more than half of all council meetings in the previous 12 months by this method. The 50% attendance cap ensures that elected members and committee members attend at least half of all meetings conducted over a 12-month period, in person.

Electronic Attendance at 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.

Related Documents

Legislation & Local Laws

Local Government Act 1995, s 5.25(1)(ba)
Local Government Regulations 1996, regulations 14C, 14CA, and 14D
Standing Orders Local Law 2018

Relevant Delegations

Strategies & Plans

Related Council Policies

Procedures, Documents & Forms

Policy URL

To be advised

Policy Owner

Directorate

Corporate & Commercial

Department

Governance & Organisational Strategy

Review Management

Next review due: July 2026

Version Management

Version	Date	Council Resolution Number	Description
1.0	July 2024	TBA	Original Policy Adopted