



APPROVES BY: MANAGER CUSTOMER AND BUSINESS INTEGRITY| DATE: 17 JANUARY 2025

CONTEXT

Council is committed to community engagement and offers many ways to provide feedback, of which petitions are just one method. These guidelines aim to establish a consistent approach to the management of petitions, to ensure they are managed in a timely and effective manner and to ensure that the views of the community are effectively received and considered in decision making processes.

Council will accept petitions from any person with an interest in the future of Wollongong. This includes residents, ratepayers, visitors, community groups and businesses.

GUIDELINES

Content of petitions

The person lodging the petition, the 'main petition contact', must ensure the petition meets the following criteria:

- relates to a matter on which Council has the power to act or is in a position to exercise a degree of influence, and contains a statement indicating the action petitioners want the Council to take.
- contains a clear and concise statement identifying the subject matter and purpose of the petition.
- contains the full name, address and any other contact details of the main petition contact.
- is prepared in accordance with the petition template available on Council's website, or in a similar legible format.
- If written in a language other than English, the petition must be accompanied by a certified translation written or typed in English, including contact details of the translator.
- is signed by a minimum of four people from a minimum of four different households.
Note: More than one person per household can sign a petition, as long as there are at least four or more people from four different households included in the petition. Residents of boarding houses would be counted as individual households for the purposes of a petition.
- includes the name of each petition signatory and a valid address (street or email address) and original signatures where applicable, i.e. must not be copied, pasted or transferred
- online petitions (ePetitions) must include the name and at least one of the following:
 - postcode, or
 - email, or
 - street addressof each petition signatory.
- is respectful in language and is not offensive, frivolous, vexatious or lacking in substance.
- contains the number of pages in the petition and number of signatures contained within.

Petitions that are received which do not contain the above information may not be considered by Council.

Lodgement of petitions

Petitions can be submitted to Council via the following methods:

- Mail – Locked Bag 8821, Wollongong DC NSW 2500
- Email – council@wollongong.nsw.gov.au
- In Person – via our Customer Service Centre at 41 Burelli Street, Wollongong.
- Councillors – Petitions may be forwarded to a Councillor with a request to consider tabling the petition at a Council meeting.

(Tabling petitions is at the discretion of the Councillor)

Petitions provided to Councillors for tabling at a Council Meeting

If a petition is provided to a Councillor, they may choose to table it at an upcoming Council Meeting, forward it directly to the General Manager to be dealt with in accordance with these guidelines or advise the petitioner to directly forward the petition to Council themselves.

Where a Councillor advises the General Manager of their intention to table a petition at a Council Meeting, and the advice is received with adequate notice, the title of the Petition will be included on the agenda and advice provided to the main petition contact (only) of the Council meeting where a petition is to be tabled.

Petitions are not subject to discussion or debate at Council Meetings.

Communication and response

The responsible Council Division will acknowledge receipt of a petition in writing to the main petition contact. In the case of a petition received via a Councillor, this will occur following the tabling of the petition at a Council meeting or the forwarding of the petition to the General Manager. Petitions will be forwarded to the relevant Manager responsible for the matter raised in the petition for investigation, consideration and response to the main petition contact.

Copies of responses to petitions tabled at Council meetings will be forwarded to Councillors.

Petitions received as submissions as part of a formal engagement activity will be presented in the associated Engagement Report for consideration by relevant decision makers.

When referencing the submission in the report to Council, staff must include as a minimum:

- a) the clear and concise statement from the petition identifying the subject matter
- b) that the submission was received as a petition; and
- c) the number of signatories contained within the petition.

Excluded petitions

In some cases, petitions may not comply with Council's Submission of Petitions Guidelines and will be deemed an 'excluded petition'. The main petition contact will be notified if this occurs, and reasons for the decision will be provided. The types of petitions listed below are deemed excluded petitions, although a petition may be excluded for other reasons:

- Any petition relating to a planning decision already determined by Council staff, a Council committee, or a resolution of Council.
- Any petitions considered by council staff to be vexatious, offensive or inappropriate.
- Petitions related to matters outside of Council's jurisdiction.

Repeat petitions

A petition will not normally be considered where it is received within 12 months of another petition being considered by Council on the same matter or a substantively similar subject. When a petition is received on a similar subject to a previous petition, petitioners will be notified of the outcome of the previous petition, if Council considers that the issues raised have been addressed.

Access to lodged petitions

Petitions received by Council are subject to the provisions of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

Personal information provided to Council in a petition may be protected by the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*. These protections are summarised in Council's *Privacy Management Plan*, which is available on Council's website. Any questions concerning privacy, or the use of personal information may be referred to Council's Privacy Contact Officer.

Details of persons signing a petition will generally only be used by Council officers to verify that the signatories have an interest in the Wollongong local government area if relevant to the petition.

REVIEW

These Guidelines will be reviewed every three years or at other times as required.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Responsible Division	Customer and Business Integrity
Date adopted	17 January 2025
Date of previous adoptions	23 September 2022, 8 October 2019
Date of next review	17 January 2028
Responsible Manager	Governance and Risk Manager