

1. Purpose

The District Council of Peterborough recognises petitions as an important mechanism through which members of the community can bring matters to Council's attention and participate in local government decision-making.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Establish clear requirements for the submission and consideration of petitions;
- Ensure petitions are managed consistently, fairly and transparently;
- Protect the privacy of petitioners and signatories;
- Clarify the responsibilities of Council administration and the Chief Executive Officer; and
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislative requirements.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all petitions submitted to the District Council of Peterborough by residents, ratepayers, businesses, community organisations and other stakeholders.

This Policy applies to both paper-based and electronic petitions.

3. Legislative Framework

This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Local Government Act 1999 (SA);
- Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations 2013;
- State Records Act 1997;
- Community Engagement Policy;
- Code of Conduct for Council Members;
- Council Meeting Procedures; and
- Any other relevant legislation, regulations or guidelines.

4. Definition of a Petition

A petition is a formal written request signed or endorsed by a number of persons seeking to:

- Bring a matter to Council's attention;

- Request Council to consider a particular course of action;
- Express support for or opposition to a proposal; or
- Raise concerns regarding a matter affecting the community.

A petition provides an opportunity for individuals or groups within the community to formally express their views to Council.

5. Requirements for a Valid Petition

In accordance with Regulation 10 of the Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations 2013, a petition must:

- a) Be legibly written, typed or printed;
- b) Clearly set out the request or submission of the petitioners;
- c) Include the full name, street address and suburb/town of each person who has signed or endorsed the petition; and
- d) Be addressed to the Council and delivered to the principal office of the Council.

A petition that does not comply with these requirements may be deemed invalid or may have individual signatures excluded from consideration.

6. Additional Council Requirements

Council requires that:

- The purpose and request of the petition be clearly stated on every page;
- The petition identifies a Head Petitioner who will act as Council's primary contact person;
- The Head Petitioner provides a postal address, email address and telephone number;
- Signatories provide sufficient information to enable their identity and address to be reasonably verified if required;
- Supporting documentation is attached separately to the petition;
- A person may only sign a petition once; and
- The petition relates to a matter within Council's functions, powers or responsibilities.

The Head Petitioner is responsible for ensuring compliance with this Policy.

7. Electronic Petitions

Council accepts electronic petitions, including petitions hosted on recognised online platforms.

Electronic petitions must:

- Clearly state the request being made to Council;
- Include the full name, street address and suburb/town of each signatory;
- Identify the Head Petitioner; and
- Comply with all legislative and Council requirements contained within this Policy.

The Head Petitioner is responsible for ensuring compliance.

8. Lodgement of Petitions

Petitions must be addressed to:

Chief Executive Officer
District Council of Peterborough

and delivered by:

In Person: Council Principal Office

Post: PO Box 121, Peterborough SA 5422

Email: council@peterborough.sa.gov.au

Council will acknowledge receipt of a petition.

To facilitate reporting to Council, petitions should be received at least seven (7) clear days prior to a scheduled Council meeting.

Petitions received after this time may be presented to a subsequent meeting.

9. Invalid Petitions

Council may determine that a petition, or part of a petition, is invalid where:

- It does not comply with legislative requirements;
- It does not comply with this Policy;
- Signatures are duplicated;
- Names, street addresses or suburbs/towns are incomplete, illegible or missing;
- Signatories cannot be reasonably identified;
- The petition contains offensive, defamatory, discriminatory or unlawful content;
- The petition seeks disclosure of confidential information;
- The petition relates to matters outside Council's powers or responsibilities; or
- The petition contains information that is knowingly false or misleading.

Council reserves the right to exclude individual signatures that do not comply with this Policy without invalidating the entire petition.

10. Duplicate Signatures

Where a person signs a petition more than once, only the first valid signature will be counted.

Where Council cannot reasonably determine which signature was submitted first, Council may disregard all duplicate entries for that person.

Duplicate signatures submitted in both electronic and paper formats will be counted only once.

11. Role of Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

- Receiving and acknowledging petitions lodged with Council;
- Determining whether a petition complies with legislative and policy requirements;
- Verifying, where necessary, the validity of signatures, street addresses and suburbs/towns provided by signatories;
- Determining the number of valid signatories;
- Determining whether any signatures should be excluded due to duplication, insufficient information or non-compliance with this Policy;
- Preparing a summary report for Council outlining the purpose of the petition, the request being made, the name of the Head Petitioner and the number of valid signatories;
- Ensuring that petition documents, signature pages and personal information of signatories are not publicly disclosed through the Council agenda process;
- Ensuring a petition, or a statement outlining the nature of the petition and the number of valid signatories, is included on the agenda of the next available Council meeting where reasonably practicable;
- Ensuring personal information is collected, stored and managed in accordance with legislative requirements;
- Maintaining appropriate records relating to petitions received by Council

12. Reporting and Consideration by Council

Upon receipt of a valid petition, the Chief Executive Officer will prepare a report for Council.

To protect the privacy of petitioners and signatories, the petition document, including all pages containing signatures, addresses or personal information, will not be published as part of the public Council agenda or minutes.

Instead, a summary report will be presented to Council outlining:

- The purpose of the petition;
- The request being made to Council;
- The name of the Head Petitioner;
- The total number of valid signatories;
- Where relevant, the number of signatories residing within and outside the Council area; and
- Any background information considered necessary to assist Council in its deliberations.

The petition and associated signature pages will be retained as Council records but will not be publicly released unless required by law.

Council will generally resolve to receive and note a petition.

Following consideration of a petition, Council may resolve to:

- Request a report from administration;
- Refer the matter to a Council committee;
- Undertake community engagement;
- Include the matter in future strategic planning or budget deliberations;
- Investigate the matter further; or
- Take any other action considered appropriate.

Council is not obliged to support or implement the request contained within a petition.

13. Attendance at Council Meetings

The Head Petitioner and signatories are not required to attend the Council meeting at which the petition is considered.

Attendance is welcomed.

Any person wishing to address Council regarding the subject matter of a petition must do so in accordance with Council's Meeting Procedures and Deputation provisions.

14. Privacy, Confidentiality and Publication

Council acknowledges its obligations regarding the collection, storage, use and disclosure of personal information.

Petitions contain personal information including names and residential addresses of signatories. To protect privacy:

- Petition documents and signature pages will not be published in Council agendas, minutes or other public documents;

- Personal information of signatories will not be disclosed publicly by Council except where required by law;
- Only a summary of the petition will be included in public Council reports;
- Council will use personal information solely for the purpose of validating and assessing the petition;
- Petition records will be securely stored and managed in accordance with the State Records Act 1997, Council's Records Management Policy and any applicable privacy obligations.

For the avoidance of doubt, the public agenda will contain only a summary of the petition and will not contain copies of petition pages, signatures, addresses or other personal information of signatories.

15. Notification of Outcome

Following Council's consideration of a petition, the Head Petitioner will be advised in writing of:

- Council's resolution; and
- Any action proposed by Council in response to the petition.

16. Records Management

All petitions received by Council will be recorded and retained in accordance with the State Records Act 1997, Council's Records Management Policy and applicable disposal schedules.

13. Document administration and control

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Policy number:	620726
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Date revoked:	N/A
Applicable legislation:	Local Government Act 1999 (SA); Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations 2013
Related documents:	Public Consultation Policy; Code of Conduct for Council Members; Council Meeting Procedures
Public consultation required / undertaken:	No
Availability	This Policy is available for inspection at the Council office, and any person may obtain a copy of this Policy upon payment of the fee fixed by Council in accordance with Council's Fees and Charges adopted each financial year. It is also available on Council's website www.Peterborough.sa.gov.au. Any grievance in relation to this policy or its application should be forwarded in writing to the Chief Executive Officer of the Council.
File reference:	To be confirmed