

Live Streaming of Public Meetings

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance in relation to the recording and live streaming of public meetings of Federation Council.

2. Background

Federation Council has a commitment to providing transparency in all decision making processes of Council to invoke trust and accountability. Council meetings are open to the public yet attendance is not always possible due to timings and location. Federation Council encompasses a Local Government Area (LGA) of over 5,000 square km and a population of over 12,000. Over half of the population resides outside of the main township of Corowa, located in the southern part of the LGA where meetings are generally held.

At the 21 February 2017 Council meeting it was resolved that all public meetings will be recorded and uploaded to the Council website to enable the public to access an audio visual recording at any time after the meetings.

Webcasting will allow the public to view the public meeting regardless of the location of the meeting and timing and regardless of their location. Meetings may also be viewed retrospectively.

3. Context

In circumstances where a meeting is closed to the public, these meetings may also be recorded, however will not be made available to the public.

Council will attempt to notify the community if live streaming is unavailable due to technical difficulties such as availability of internet connection, device malfunction, power outages and unavailability of social media platforms or service provider outages.

Individual user settings such as bandwidth, internet connection, PC memory and capacity may also impact on the quality of the live stream and recording but are outside the control of Council.

The Chairperson may at any time direct the live streaming to be terminated if the content of discussion is determined to be inappropriate to be published.

Material that is inappropriate to be published may include but not be limited to that which is

- defamatory in nature
- an infringement of Copyright
- a breach of Privacy or discloses personal information
- is offensive, abusive or discriminatory in nature
- incites hatred or vilifies another person
- is confidential or privileged council information.

4. Scope

The policy applies to all public meetings of Federation Council with the exclusion of those meetings that are closed to the public in accordance with section 10A of the Local Government Act 1993.

The live streaming of meetings will be carried out in accordance with relevant legislation concerning privacy and access to information as stated in item 11 below.

This policy will apply to:

- Administrator/Councillors
- permanent employees, whether full-time or part-time
- temporary or casual employees
- consultants
- contractors working for Federation Council and their employees
- other people who perform council official functions whose conduct and activities could be investigated by an investigating authority, including volunteers
- all persons attending the Council meeting including Councillors, staff, invited speakers contributors and observers (such as students), visitors and members of the public gallery.

5. Policy Statement

At the start of each meeting the chairperson is to make a statement informing those in attendance that the meeting is being webcast and that those in attendance should refrain from making any defamatory statements.

Meetings held at the Council Chambers in Corowa and Urana will be streamed live and recorded.

From the Model Code of Meeting Practice as prescribed - A recording of each meeting of the council and committee of the council is to be retained on the council's website for up to 12 months. Recordings of meetings may be disposed of in accordance with the State Records Act 1998.

In most cases, once a Council Meeting has concluded, the video will be available to watch online via a computer or mobile device on You Tube within two business days.

6. Responsibilities

The Director of Corporate and Community has overall responsibility for the policy.

7. Definitions

Council – Federation Council

Public Meeting – Ordinary Meetings of Council and Extraordinary Meetings of Council. Does not include Pre-Meeting Briefing sessions, workshops or information sessions designed to provide information and expertise to enhance the skills and knowledge of councillors as required for their role.

Webcasting – The use of the world wide web (internet) for broadcasting information and distributing media files. A **webcast** is a media presentation distributed over the Internet using streaming media technology to distribute a single content source to many simultaneous listeners/viewers. A webcast may either be distributed live or on demand.

8. Commencement

This policy was first introduced in April 2017.

9. Privacy

The audio visual equipment will be set up to ensure all Councillors are able to be viewed and will not specifically be directed towards the public gallery, however Council is unable to expressly guarantee that a person's image will not be webcast. To ensure that all visitors to the meeting are aware of the intention to record the proceedings and live stream these to the public, signage will be displayed in the main foyer of the Council Chamber and a statement read out prior to the commencement of each meeting. Remaining in the public gallery will automatically presume consent to broadcast a person's image.

10. Risk

Council meetings like any public forum are a platform for open questioning and an open expression of views. Whilst the Council has a Code of Meeting Practice and a Code of Conduct Policy that strongly opposes bullying, harassment, abuse, discrimination, vilification and defamatory comments of any kind, some topics may occasionally invoke strong emotions and comments. A consequence of having a broader audience in attendance made possible through the live streaming inevitably increases the likelihood and/or the severity of comments being regarded as contravening these ethics and standards.

Individuals are liable for any contravening any of these ethics and Councils Code of Meeting Practice or any Law such as Privacy. No protection will be afforded to staff, Councillors or the public where comments made during a meeting are subsequently challenged in a court of law and determined to be slanderous, defamatory or inappropriate in nature.

11. Public Participation at Meetings

If members of the community are invited to speak directly to Councillors about items on the agenda at public meetings they will be required to adhere to the Councils Code of Meeting Practice and Procedure for addressing Council Meetings which will entail them signing a declaration of intent to speak and acknowledgment of Council code of ethics and privacy considerations prior to the meeting.

The full content of the meeting will be recorded including questioners from the public gallery; a person's full name and where they are from may be read out and recorded.

12. Access to archived recordings

Access to records will be available free of charge from Council's You Tube Channel via links on Council's website for up to 12 months.

13. References & Associated Documents

13.1 Relevant Legislation

Copyright Act 1968
Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
Local Government Act (1993)
Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
State Records Act 1998

13.2 Relevant Council Policies

Federation Council Code of Meeting Practice
Federation Council Code of Conduct

14. Policy History

Version	Date	Changes / Amendments
Version 1	09/03/2017	Development of document for Federation Council
Version 2	17/03/2018	Review of document – New template applied, removal of amalgamation reference in Item 2, addition of definition of public meeting at Item 6.
Version 3	26/02/2019	Review of policy – New template applied, included Urana meetings and updated in accordance with items 5.21 and 5.22 of the Model Code of Meeting Practice prescribed on 14 December 2018. Adopted 21 May 2019

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