

Live Streaming of Council Meetings

Purpose

Yass Valley 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. Yass Valley Council encompasses a Local Government Area (LGA) of approximately 4,000 square km and a population in excess of 16,000.

Live streaming will allow the public to view Council meetings held in the Council Chambers. Meetings may also be viewed retrospectively.

This policy will provide guidance in relation to the recording and live streaming of council meetings at Yass Valley Council.

Scope

This policy applies to all public meetings of Yass Valley Council with the exclusion of those meetings which 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 5 below.

This policy will apply to:

- Councillors
- Permanent employees, whether full-time or part-time
- Temporary or casual employees
- Consultants
- Contractors working for Yass Valley Council and their employees
- Other people

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Public Meeting –	Ordinary meetings of Council and extraordinary meetings of Council
Webcasting –	The use of the worldwide 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.

Policy Principles

1 Context

In circumstances where a meeting is closed to the public, a recording may be made however any such recording will not be made available to the public.

Council will attempt to notify the public 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 Mayor, may at any time, direct the live streaming to be terminated if the content of the 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

2 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 livestream these to the public, signage will be displayed in the Council chamber and a statement will be read out prior to the commencement of each meeting. Remaining in the public gallery will automatically presume consent to broadcast a person's image and/or voice.

3 Risk

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

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.

4 Access to Archived Recordings

Access to records will be available free of charge from Council's You Tube Channel via links in the meetings section on Council's website for a minimum of two (2) years.

Responsibilities & Review

The Director Corporate & Community will:

- Provide all necessary administrative support for the operation of this policy
- Develop and document any procedures for the effective implementation of this policy
- Keep sufficient records to enable monitoring of compliance with this policy and provide information required for Integrated Planning and Reporting purposes and internal organisational performance measurement.
- The review of this policy will incorporate relevant legislation, documentation released from relevant state agencies and best practice guidelines. This policy will be reviewed every two years from the adoption date. The next review date is: 22 June 2023.

References

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following:

Legislation Policies and procedures	Code of Meeting Practice
	Code of Conduct
	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i>
	<i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009</i>
	<i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998</i>
	<i>Copyright Act 1968</i>
	<i>State Records Act 1998</i>

Approval History

Stage	Date	Comment	MagiQ Reference
Original	22/6/2019	Approved by Council	300731
Reviewed	25/3/2022	Minor adjustment	300731

Ownership and Approval

Responsibility	Role
Author	ICT Manager
Owner	Director Corporate & Community
Endorser	EMT
Approver	Council