



INFORMATION ON PETITIONS

What is a petition?

A petition is a request for action from the community. It informs Council in a public way of the views of a section of the community and serves as a means of placing community concerns before Council.

The subject of a petition must be a matter on which Council has the power to act, i.e. a matter that can be dealt with by the local government. For example a petition requesting improvements to the power supply cannot be presented to Council, as this is a State Government responsibility.

The Shire will only accept petitions from electors of the district. An elector is a person who owns or occupies rateable property within the Shire of Mundaring and is eligible to vote in local and State elections.

Requirements for petitions

The *Shire of Mundaring Meeting Procedures Local Law 2015* sets out a number of requirements governing the format and presentation of a petition. It is important that those involved in drawing up petitions familiarise themselves with these requirements before taking steps to collect signatures. This will avoid the possibility of the petition being ruled out of order and not being presented to Council. These are the requirements of the local law:

- Be addressed to the President
- Be made by electors of the district
- State the request on each page of the petition
- Contain the legible names, addresses and signatures of the electors making the request
- Contain a summary of the reasons for the request
- State the name of the person to whom, and an address at which, notice to the petitioners can be given
- Not contain offensive or insulting language.

Collecting signatures

Although technically a petition only needs to have one elector's signature to be accepted, it will obviously appear more representative of public feeling if it is signed by as many people as possible.

Getting the petition presented

A petition can only be presented to Council at an Ordinary Meeting of Council by an Elected Member or the Chief Executive Officer.

Although an Elected Member is not bound to present a petition, it is traditionally accepted that they will present it, irrespective of personal views. Presentation of a petition by an Elected Member does not mean that the Member necessarily agrees or disagrees with its content.

In order to verify compliance with the local law requirements, the petition must be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer prior to the commencement of the Council Meeting at which it is to be presented.

Petitions at Council Meetings

At item 8.2 in the Order of Business on the Agenda the Elected Member or Chief Executive Officer presenting the petition will read out the name and address of the initiator of the petition, a summary of the reasons for the petition being submitted and the number of valid signatures contained within it (if possible).

When the petition is received, no discussion on the matter will take place and Council will move a motion “that the petition be received and that it be referred to the Chief Executive Officer for action.”

What happens after a petition has been presented?

Every petition presented will be referred by the Chief Executive Officer to the Directorate responsible for the matter which is the subject of the petition. An assigned staff member will advise the initiator what action is proposed in dealing with the petition. This may involve a detailed report for a future meeting for Council's consideration.