

Working with Members of Parliament

A4501880



Lifestyle Capital of Victoria

Purpose

To provide a framework to ensure Council follows a clear, equitable and apolitical process when working with Members of Parliament and government representatives.

Scope

This protocol aims to provide guidance and clarification on the process for involving Members of Parliament (including Ministers) and other government representatives in Council functions, communication with and about Members of Parliament and other matters.

The protocol applies to all Council officers, particularly those that are responsible for organising a Council function that may require attendance from a Member of Parliament and/or government representative. Relevant funding agreements, Victorian and Federal Government guidelines and policies should be adhered to in the first instance.

Members of Parliament and other government representatives for Frankston City include:

Lower house:

- Federal Member for Dunkley
- State Member for Frankston
- State Member for Carrum
- State Member for Hastings

Upper house:

- Senators for Victoria
- State Members for South-East Metropolitan Region
- State Members for Eastern Victoria Region

Other:

- Federal and Victorian Government Ministers
- Federal and Victorian Shadow Ministers
- Party Patrons
- Other elected officials
- Office staffers of the Member of Parliament and government officials
- Political candidates

This protocol is to be applied fairly with due consideration to all Members of Parliament.

Council functions mean any event hosted, organised, funded or supported by Council, such as:

- Events for Council projects receiving Victorian and/or Federal Government investment

- Media and photo opportunities
- Funding announcements
- Official openings, launches and ‘turning of the sod’ functions
- Meetings and presentations (such as regular Members of Parliament breakfast)
- Council community/public events (such as Christmas Festival of Lights, Little Beauty Market etc.)
- Candidates Forums and live debates

Support means a financial contribution by Victorian and/or Federal Government towards a local project, or a decision by Victorian and/or Federal Government. Other forms such as a letter of support, election commitments and lobbying by a Member of Parliament in opposition is not considered support for the purposes of plaque signage requirements.

Communications with and about Members of Parliament means:

- Direct phone calls, emails, letters and other forms of contact
- Media releases, media responses, social media posts, printed articles, eNews • Statements in Council Meetings and in public forums

Background

From time to time Council officers will be required to invite Victorian and Federal Members of Parliament (including Ministers) and government representatives to a range of council functions.

This protocol ensures a fair and considered approach is taken at all times when inviting a Member of Parliament or government representative to a Council function, regardless of political affiliation, with information clearly and equally communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Furthermore, Council has regular communication with and about Members of Parliament in various forums, including paid, earned, shared and owned media.

In order to form and retain strong relationships with all stakeholders, Council considers information sharing where possible between Council, Members of Parliament and government departments to be of significant value not only for all stakeholders, but for the Frankston City community in general.

Adhering to this protocol is important for fostering positive working relationships with all Members of Parliament and government representatives, delivering positive outcomes for the Frankston City community while ensuring Council clearly remains apolitical. **Protocol**

Council functions

Prior to an invitation being distributed to Members of Parliament and government representatives, the Council officer must notify the Coordinator Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships and/or Manager Community Relations, in addition to seeking approval from their Manager and/or Director.

Where there is a funding agreement for a project requiring a Council function (such as an official opening), the relevant Council officer will follow appropriate funding agreement procedures alongside this protocol.

In most instances, this will mean a lead-time of about 6-8 weeks for Ministers.

The Council officer should ensure the role of the Member of Parliament and/or government representative at any function is clearly identified and understood (examples include representing a Minister, speaking, ribbon cutting, plaque unveiling, site walk through etc.).

Fair consideration must be given to the availability of all stakeholders in order to reach a mutually agreed date, time and location for council functions, as much as is practicable. This includes Victorian and Federal Parliament sitting dates and Senate Estimates Committee meetings (available at: parliament.vic.gov.au and: aph.gov.au or by phoning the relevant stakeholder). It is recommended officers consult with the Coordinator Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships in the first instance.

In a situation whereby a Council function is faced with time constraints, the best possible option for the majority of stakeholders will be adopted, including Mayor and Councillor availability.

Priority in scheduling should be given as equally as possible, however in instances where this is not possibly achievable, priority should be administered depending on support, in the following sequence: • Federal and/or Victorian Government Ministers

- Federal and/or State Members (lower house then upper house)
- Council (Mayor, Councillors and EMT)
- Federal and/or Victorian Government departments/agencies • Other stakeholders

In addition to including funding partners (such as Federal and/or Victorian Government Ministers) in Council functions, Council commits to inviting all appropriate elected local Members of Parliament in order to showcase the positive achievements within the local community, regardless of funding contributions. In these situations, the Members of Parliament role at the function will primarily be attendance only, with no formalities.

Council will advise all Members of Parliament and government representatives of the invitee list along with final attendees prior to the Council function occurring.

Where possible and as required, a detailed agenda and/or run sheet will be provided to Members of Parliament and government representatives at least 48 hours prior to the Council function.

In the event that a Member of Parliament or government representative is unable to attend a function they have been invited to by Council, a representative (such as an Electorate Officer or Advisor) is welcome to accept the invitation and attend on the MPs behalf. This excludes when an Electorate Officer or Advisor is running as a candidate for council, state or federal government.

When attending Council functions, attendees are asked to be respectful and professional towards others and should refrain from making negative comments or connotations towards other Members of Parliament, government, parties, businesses or organisations.

Public events hosted by Council

Members of Parliament and government representatives are required to follow Council's adopted *Election Signs and Events Policy* when attending Council community events, which will be administered and managed by the relevant Council officers, as required.

Use of Council facilities

Council-owned facilities, such as community centres, halls and the Frankston Arts Centre, are available for public use. Members of Parliament and political candidates are able to use these facilities for community related events at their own expense and following the appropriate processes. Please refer also to Council's *Election Signs and Events Policy*.

Communications

Prior to any external communications being distributed regarding Victorian and Federal Government funding, projects, programs or services, the Council officer must first notify the Coordinator Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships and/or Manager Community Relations for advice and review.

When preparing a media release for publication, the Council officer must ensure the relevant Government spokesperson and local Member of Parliament is provided the opportunity to provide a quote. Where quotes from a Member of Parliament are included within Council communications (such as a media release), the comments must be respectful and professional towards others and should refrain from making negative comments or connotations towards other Members of Parliament, government, parties, businesses or organisations.

Similarly, when preparing a Council social media post (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram etc) the relevant Members of Parliament should be tagged as appropriate. The Coordinator Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships should first review this.

Council is committed to having open two-way communication with Members of Parliament and government representatives as needed and through formal bi-monthly meetings where all Frankston City Members of Parliament are invited to attend whereby information can be shared, questions can be asked and answered, updates can be provided, problems can be flagged and resolved and successes can be celebrated.

Plaque signage

For a range of capital works projects, such as sporting pavilion redevelopments, road upgrades and more, Council takes responsibility for the printing and installation of permanent plaque signage, which includes acknowledgement of all relevant project supporters.

Where there is a funding agreement for a project requiring a plaque signage, the relevant Council officer will follow appropriate funding agreement procedures alongside this protocol. This includes logo usage.

Council's plaque signage will acknowledge all government project supporters, such as a financial contribution from or decision made by Victorian and/or Federal Governments. For the purposes of plaque signage requirements, a letter of support, election commitment and lobbying by a Member of Parliament in opposition is not considered support and will therefore not be included on plaque signage.

The order of acknowledgement on plaque signage will be as follows (depending on support provided):

1. Federal Government Minister or representative
2. Victorian Government Minister or representative
3. Mayor or representative
4. All Councillors listed at the bottom of each plaque

This protocol excludes temporary construction signage.

Dispute resolution

Where a Member of Parliament and/or government representative feels a decision in relation to a council function, communication or plaque signage has been unfairly made, they may:

1. Liaise with the Coordinator Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships
2. If the matter is still of concern, the Coordinator may seek input and a formal response from the Manager Community Relations to the Member of Parliament
3. Should the matter fail to be resolved, the Member of Parliament may liaise directly with the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer in order to seek a resolution in line with Council and other relevant policies, guidelines and procedures.

Speech and acknowledgement order

Council acknowledges that local Members of Parliament should have the opportunity to speak at local functions such as an official opening, even where they are not in government.

Officers should liaise with the Coordinator Advocacy and Strategic Partnership and/or Manager Community Relations in relation to event agendas and speech running orders prior to their development and for final approval before distribution.

Not all Members of Parliament are required to give a speech or be acknowledged by Council. This will be determined based on a Members involvement on individual projects.

Speech running order

1. CEO, Director or Manager to officiate proceedings and provide welcome to guests (unless another MC is arranged)
2. Federal Government Minister or representative (only if support provided to the project)
3. Victorian Government Minister or representative (only if support provided to the project)
4. Mayor or representative
5. Local Federal/State Members of Parliament

- a. Lower house federal
 - b. Lower house state
 - c. Upper house federal
 - d. Upper house state
6. Key stakeholders (such as sporting club Presidents, school Principals, business owner etc) 7. Others as required

Acknowledgment order for Mayor/Council speech

1. Federal Government Ministers or representative
2. Victorian Government Ministers or representative
3. Local Federal/State Members of Parliament
 - a. Lower house federal
 - b. Lower house state
 - c. Upper house federal
 - d. Upper house state
 - e. Others
4. Key stakeholders (such as sporting club Presidents, school Principals, business owner etc)
5. Councillors
6. Others as required

Political candidates at events

Political candidates are able to attend Council functions that are open to the public as a community member only. Council does not invite political candidates to participate in formalities of Council functions, such as speeches at official openings or participation in photo opportunities unrelated to Council's advocacy campaign.

Where Council is hosting an advocacy related event, such as a Candidates Forum, all local political candidates will be invited to attend and provided the opportunity to speak. This information will be discussed collaboratively and will be provided to attendees prior to the council function.

Caretaker mode

During election caretaker periods, Council will limit the scheduling of Council functions such as sod turnings, media opportunities etc in line with the *Election Period Policy 2020*.

If appropriate, Council may schedule and promote Candidates Forums to enable all candidates for an electorate to speak to key issues within the electorate and in accordance with the official agenda and 'rules of engagement' as developed and distributed by Council. To ensure the event provides equal opportunities for all candidates the order of speakers will be randomly drawn by the event host.

Political and or election signage and material

The below types of Council functions may allow for Member of Parliament and government signage (such as a banner) and materials, which will be stipulated and confirmed in the event invitation: • Projects receiving Victorian and/or Federal Government investment

- Turning of the sod
- Media, photo and funding announcements
- Official openings and launches
- Funding announcements

Council’s *Election Signs and Events Policy* outlines the rules which apply to signs and campaign activity at official council functions.

Council reserves the right, at its absolute discretion, to remove any materials or signage to enable the smooth running of the function.

Supporting documents

- Contact list – State and Federal Members, Ministers, Shadow Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries – Advocacy – June 2021 (A4403878)
- Invitation letter template to MPs and Ministers (A4150180)
- Invitation and event checklist with Members of Parliament (A4150188)
- Invitation template for Outlook calendar invitation
- Run sheet template

Related documents

Policies	Forms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communications Policy May 2017</i> • <i>Community Engagement Policy 2015-2017</i> • <i>Election Period Policy 2020</i> • <i>Election Signs and Events Policy</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of Assembly of Councillors • Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Form • Documents for signing form • Speech request form • Internal event notification form
Guidelines/Procedures/Processes	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding Guidelines May 2015 • Memo to Councillors Guidelines • Memo to Councillors procedure • Internal event application process • <i>Complaints process</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book a corporate banner • How to access and use corporate branded templates • Internal event application requirements • <i>Council Meeting timetable</i>
Protocols	

· Invitations and visits during election periods protocol (draft)	· Victorian and Federal Government funding agreements, publicity guidelines and other related documents
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Related documents publicly available online at: frankston.vic.gov.au are identified in *italics*. All other related documents are available on Grapevine (Council’s internal internet).

Responsible officer

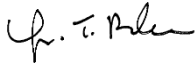
Should you have any questions about these protocols or need assistance, contact the Coordinator Advocacy and Engagement as your first point of contact.

Officer/s	Responsibilities
Coordinator Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First point of contact for advice for Event/Project Officers • Confirm availability of Members of Parliament • Liaise with Members of Parliament and other key stakeholders • Prepare correspondence and review correspondence to Members of Parliament • Determine appropriate speaking order and roles of attendees • Determine MPs inclusion in Council communications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure process is adhered to and provide assistance where required • Proof content of plaques
Manager Community Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with EMT and Councillors on sensitive matters • Provide advice to Coordinator Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships and Event/Project Officers where required
Communications Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaises with Members of Parliament on quotes for inclusion in media releases • Includes Members of Parliament in media release contact list • Prepares speech and media statements • Attend photo opportunities • Ensure relevant Communications, Branding and Publication Style policies, protocols and guidelines are adhered to
Officer/s	Responsibilities
Executive Manager to the CEOs Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirming CEO availability and date/time preferences • Following up and advising on CEO approvals and feedback • Liaising with relevant officers regarding MC notes, speeches, event roles, responsibilities and procedures on behalf of CEO

Councillors Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirming Mayor and Councillors availability and date/time preferences • Liaise with Communications Team and Event/Project Officer regarding speech, MC and Mayoral/Councillors role/s
Event/Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with other relevant officers (Council, Electorate Officers and Government Departments) • Adhere to protocol and supporting documentation • Liaise with key stakeholders • Event organisation

Authorisation

This Protocol is managed by the Community Relations Department, and is approved by Frankston City's Mayor and Council's Chief Executive Officer (CEO):



Mayor, Frankston City



CEO, Frankston City Council

in accordance with Frankston City Council resolution at its Council Meeting of 9 August 2021.