
MM3/21 REMOTE ATTENDANCE BY COUNCILLORS AT COUNCIL MEETINGS - Mayor, Councillor Jerome Laxale**File Number: GRP/21/8 - BP21/244**

The Office of Local Government (OLG) has issued a consultation paper, Remote Attendance by Councillors at Council Meetings, to seek the views of Councils and others on proposed amendments to the Model Code of Meeting Practice for Local Councils in NSW (Model Meeting Code) to allow Councils to permit individual Councillors to attend meetings remotely by audio-visual link in certain circumstances as follows:-

- due to illness;
- disability;
- carer responsibilities;
- a natural disaster; or
- because the Councillor is away from the local area on Council related business

The proposed new provisions will not be mandatory, and Councils will be able to choose whether to include them in their adopted Codes of Meeting Practice.

While the OLG is consulting on the proposed amendments to the Model Meeting Code, temporary amendments will be made to the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 (the Regulation) to allow Councils to permit individual (but not all) Councillors to attend meetings by audio-visual link for the certain circumstances outlined above until 31 December 2021.

The decision to permit Councillors to attend and participate in meetings remotely by audio-visual link will be one that is at each Council's discretion.

The OLG have advised that further guidance will be provided on the interim arrangements when the Regulation amendment is made.

It is recommended that from 25 March 2021 Councillors are able to attend Council and Committee meetings online subject to the amendments to be made to the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 to allow councils to permit individual (but not all) Councillors to attend meetings by audio-visual link for the reasons outlined within this Mayoral Minute.

Submission to OLG Regarding Remote Attendance by Councillors at Council Meetings

City of Ryde recognises that it successfully implemented remote attendance by councillors at meetings by audio-visual link during the COVID-19 pandemic.

MM3/21 (continued)

As a progressive Council that values diversity of representation, it is recommended that a submission is put forward to the OLG that the Model Code of Meeting Practice for Local Councils in NSW is amended to enable remote attendance by councillors at meetings by audio-visual link for any reason. This change should be mandated for all Councils across NSW.

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That from 25 March 2021 Councillors are able to attend Council and Committee meetings online subject to the amendments to be made to the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 to allow councils to permit individual (but not all) Councillors to attend meetings by audio-visual link for the reasons outlined within this Mayoral Minute.
- (b) That in response to the consultation paper “Remote Attendance at Council and Committee Meetings”, Council makes a submission to the OLG before COB 3 May 2021, recommending that the Model Code of Meeting Practice for Local Councils in NSW is amended to enable remote attendance by Councillors at meetings by audio-visual link for any reason.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report.

Report Prepared By:



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Mayor