

# Councillor Speaking Opportunity Protocol

<b>Date adopted</b>	26 May 2025
<b>Adopted by</b>	Council
<b>Review due</b>	26 May 2029
<b>Responsible officer</b>	Manager Governance
<b>Records reference</b>	9197654

## 1. Purpose

This policy provides a clear framework for determining the speaking order of Councillors at Council-organised events, functions, ceremonies, and any other official speaking opportunities. It aims to ensure a consistent approach across all relevant occasions.

## 2. Application And Scope

This policy applies to all formal speaking engagements including but not limited to;

- Civic and community events hosted or supported by the Council
- Official ceremonies (e.g. openings, launches, commemorations)
- Public forums, briefings, or stakeholder meetings
- Any other occasion where councillors are invited to speak on behalf of Council.

## 3. General Provisions

In accordance with this Policy and section 18(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the Mayor is the principal spokesperson of the Council.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for providing professional advice and guidance to Councillors regarding this policy.

### 3.1. Priority Speaking Order

At all relevant Council events and official speaking opportunities, the speaking order shall be prioritised as follows:

1. Mayor – The Mayor will be given the first opportunity to speak, deliver official remarks, or represent Council on behalf of all elected members.
2. Deputy Mayor – The Deputy Mayor shall have the second opportunity to speak, particularly in support of or in the absence of the Mayor.
3. Councillors – As determined sequentially by most recent Mayors, then most recent Deputy Mayors.
4. Councillors – As determined by earliest elected to Council.

No Mayor or Councillor may direct an alternative priority order not provided for within this protocol.

### 3.2. Multiple Speaking Opportunities

Should an event have more than one speaking opportunity for Councillors, the positions will be allocated according to priority speaking order until all speaking positions are fulfilled.

### 3.3. Specific Requests

Where a specific request for a Councillor or Councillors has been received from an external party, the request must be considered by the Mayor for their consent. Should consent not be granted, the priority speaking order will apply.

Where the requested Councillor or Councillors are not available to speak, or decline the opportunity, then priority passes to the next available Councillor or Councillors according to priority speaking order.

### 3.4. Speaking Engagement Management

Where possible, speaking roles and order should be confirmed in advance with event organisers by the Office of Mayor and Councillors. In cases where speaking roles are requested or offered externally, Councillors must notify the Office of Mayor and Councillors and ensure consistency with this policy.

### 3.5. Appointment

If a Councillor other than the Mayor serves as the Chairperson of a Council Committee, they may be given speaking priority at the discretion of the Mayor immediately following the Mayor or Deputy Mayor at events specifically designated for that Committee. Standard protocol will apply in all other respects.

### 3.6. Suspension of Priority Speaking Order

Should Councillors invited to, or present at, any function choose to suspend this protocol and amicably negotiate speaking positions, they may do so only if all present Councillors agree. If there is not full agreement between all Councillors present at the function, the priority speaking order remains operative.

### 3.7. Circumstances not Provided For

Should any circumstance arise for which this protocol does not provide, the Mayor may exercise discretion as to how the circumstances will be resolved.

## 4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Priority speaking order	The sequence in which speaking opportunities are allocated.

## 5. Related Documents

Name	Location
Model Councillor Code of Conduct	Council's Website: <a href="https://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Council/About-Council/Councillors">https://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Council/About-Council/Councillors</a>
Melton City Council Governance Rules	Council's Website: <a href="https://www.melton.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/5/council/about-council/council-meetingsminutes/governance-rules.pdf">https://www.melton.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/5/council/about-council/council-meetingsminutes/governance-rules.pdf</a>

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