



What is a petition?

Petitions inform the Council, in a public way, of the views of sections of the community and they serve as one means of placing community concerns before Council. Any person or group of people may petition the Council to take some form of action over a particular issue.

For example, petitions may ask the Council to change an existing policy, local law or recent decision or for the Council to take action for a certain purpose or for the benefit of particular persons. The subject of a petition however must be a matter on which the Council has the power to act. Care must be taken in the wording of petitions as the City requires certain information and content.

Petition requirements

Clause 3.5 of the City of Nedlands Standing Orders Local Law sets out a number of requirements governing the format and presentation of petitions. These are designed to ensure the authenticity of petitions and protect the intentions of petitioners and the Council. The local law does not impose any particular style of expression but certain other requirements must be met.

It is important that those involved in drawing up petitions familiarise themselves with the 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. To be presented to Council, a petition must be respectful and temperate in its language, contain the name, address and signature of each petitioner; and have the name of the person who lodged the petition with the Council shown at the top of each page thereof but need not otherwise be in any particular form.

Who can start or sign a petition?

Although a petition only needs to have two electors' signatures to be accepted it will appear more representative of public feeling if it is signed by as many people as possible. Although anyone can sign a petition, only those City electors will be recorded in the official signature count. An elector is a person who owns or occupies rateable property within the City and is eligible to vote in local government and state elections.

How can I get the petition presented?

A petition can only be presented to Council at an ordinary Council meeting by the Mayor, a Councillor or the CEO. This can be any Councillor and does not have to be a Councillor from a particular ward. The person initiating the petition is to forward the petition to the CEO or an elected member prior to the commencement of the ordinary Council meeting at which they would like the petition presented.



Although the elected member is not bound to present a petition, it is traditionally accepted that he or she 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.

What happens in a Council meeting?

One of the first items of business at a Council meeting is to receive any petitions that have been presented. The CEO or Councillor presenting the petition will read out a summary of the reasons for the petition being submitted and the amount of signatures within it. When the petition is received, no discussion on the matter will take place however the petition will be referred to administration for appropriate action.

What happens after a petition has been presented?

An assigned staff member will inform the petition initiator the action proposed in dealing with the petition. This may involve having to prepare a detailed report for a future meeting of the Council for its consideration. The head petitioner is generally accepted as being the first signatory to it.