

ELECTED MEMBER AND STAFF INTERACTION

Policy No. 090

1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to assist Elected Members in carrying out their responsibilities as elected representatives by specifically addressing their ability to interact and receive advice from staff.

2 Scope

This policy is applicable to all Elected Members and employees of City of Darwin.

3 Policy Statement

Elected Member Responsibilities

Communication by Elected Members with employees must be conducted in accordance with Policy No. 014 - *Elected Members Code of Conduct*.

Elected Members will direct requests to Alderman Support as follows:

- pertaining to meetings including Council business
- pertaining to events
- pertaining to community enquiries
- pertaining to advisory committees outside the scope of membership of the committee
- for advice of a technical or professional nature to assist with decision-making obligations and responsibilities
- for help or advice of a nature given to the public
- for information
- for professional development and other support functions.

Requests can also be made to General Managers, with Alderman Support copied into the request.

Requests can be made via phone, email, applications such as See Click Fix, or in person. The preferred method of communication of requests is via email to ensure that Council can maintain appropriate records in accordance with the *Information Act*.

Where the organisation receives correspondence addressed directly to individual elected members or Ward alderman as a group, it is expected that these enquiries will be responded to by elected members.

Correspondence received addressed to all elected members will be forwarded to Alderman Support, with a response to be provided from the Lord Mayor.

Should elected members require assistance from the organisation in responding to these enquiries, they should be submitted to Alderman Support as a request.

Council Policy No. 090 – ELECTED MEMBER AND STAFF INTERACTION				
Version	Decision Number	Adoption Date	Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer	Next Review Date
1	ORD151/19	11/06/19		11/06/2023



ELECTED MEMBER AND STAFF INTERACTION

Policy No. 090

Requests will be categorised as:

- **Urgent:** where the information requested by the Elected Member is of a matter defined as urgent by safety, risk management or reputational risk implications. Should this situation arise outside of business hours, these requests must be acted on immediately and raised with the Chief Executive Officer.
- **Routine:** where the information requested by the Elected Member is routine and is readily available from Council’s business systems, the organisation will provide the response within a reasonable timeframe of being notified of the request.

The requests will be tracked to monitor progress, and will be escalated should appropriate action not be taken.

Employee Responsibilities

Communication by employees with Elected Members must be conducted in accordance with the *City of Darwin Code of Conduct* and occur:

- in a respectful, reasonable and professional manner
- in accordance with the law and the local government principles
- in accordance with Council’s policies, guidelines and procedures
- in accordance with Council’s organisational CARES values
- in good faith.

In circumstances where staff are unsure whether or not they should provide information to, or respond to a request from, an elected member, they should refer the matter to their General Manager or to the CEO.

If an Elected Member contacts an employee in contravention of this Policy, the employee should refer the request to Alderman Support.

If an Elected Member directs or attempts to direct an employee about the way in which their duties are to be performed, the employee shall report the circumstances to the their line manager, General Manager or the Chief Executive Officer as soon as possible.

Employees shall not discuss with an Elected Member any matter relating to the terms and conditions of their employment with Council.

Handling of Information

Alderman Support shall keep records of advice given to Elected Members in the same manner as if they were providing advice to a member of the public. Alderman Support shall ensure that a record of the advice is stored electronically in Council’s systems.

Both Elected Members and employees acknowledge that the information provided in relation to a request may be confidential and that they must adhere to the Act, the *Information Act* and other relevant Acts/Regulations relating to privacy when they are in

Council Policy No. 090 – ELECTED MEMBER AND STAFF INTERACTION				
Version	Decision Number	Adoption Date	Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer	Next Review Date
1	ORD151/19	11/06/19		11/06/2023



ELECTED MEMBER AND STAFF INTERACTION

Policy No. 090

receipt of information that may affect individuals, organisation, the Council, or provides an unfair advantage to someone.

4 Definitions

Alderman Support refers to an employee whose role is to support elected members.

CEO refers to the Chief Executive Officer of City of Darwin appointed in accordance with the Local Government Act.

Council refers to the City of Darwin Council.

Employee refers to any employee, contractor, volunteer etc. of City of Darwin.

Requests refers to any request by an Elected Member for information or advice.

5 Legislative References

Local Government Act 2008
 Local Government (Administration) Regulations
 Information Act

6 Procedures / Related Documents

Policy No 014 - Elected Members Code of Conduct
 Policy No 027 - Elected Members Access to Council Information
 City of Darwin Code of Conduct

7 Responsibility / Application

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible to Council to undertake the day-to-day management of the council's operations (including the management of staff); and to provide or obtain for Council the information and advice the council reasonably requires to effectively carry out its functions.

8 Document Control

Council Policy			Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer	
Version	Decision Number	Adoption Date	History	Next Review Date
1	ORD151/19	11/06/19	New policy adopted	11/06/2023
2				
3				

Council Policy No. 090 – ELECTED MEMBER AND STAFF INTERACTION				
Version	Decision Number	Adoption Date	Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer	Next Review Date
1	ORD151/19	11/06/19		11/06/2023

