AUDIO/AUDIOVISUAL CONFERENCING

COUNCIL POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy authorises a Member's attendance at a Council Meeting by way of audio/audiovisual conferencing and describes the duties and obligations of a Member who attends by audio or audiovisual means.

PRINCIPLES

Council is committed to facilitate access and participation in meetings by permitting Members to be present and participate remotely by means of audio or audiovisual conferencing.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

TERM	DEFINITION
Audio/Audiovisual Conferencing	means a facility that enables audio and visual communication between persons at different places.
Council Meeting	means an Ordinary or Special Council Meeting and/or Committee Meeting.
Committee	means a Committee established under legislation, being the Administrative Review Committee, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Performance Appraisal Committee and Risk Management and Audit Committee and any other Council Committee
Member	means an Elected Member (individuals holding office of a member of Council) or Member of a Committee
Carer's Responsibilities	means the care for a partner or family member who is in need of care and support.
Legislation	The term refers to the *Local Government Act 2019* (NT), as amended from time to time.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Attendance

1.1. A Member may attend a meeting via audio or audiovisual conferencing to allow the business of Council to continue by maintaining quorum or when the Member is physically prevented from attending a meeting due to:

1.1.1. A granted leave of absence, being a distance greater than 100km from the appointed place of meeting;

1.1.2. carer's responsibilities;

1.1.3. ill health of a Member or member of their household;

1.1.4. disability

1.1.5. or a natural disaster.

1.2. A member may also attend a Special Council Meeting via audio or audiovisual conferencing when physically prevented from attending a meeting due to short notice.

1.3. Members are required to notify Council or the Committee at a prior meeting to attend a meeting via audio or audiovisual conference and the reasons set out in 1.1.

1.4. Where unforeseen circumstances arise under section 1.1, a Member must advise the Chief Executive Officer of City of Palmerston (CEO) with a minimum of one hours' notice, prior to the meeting of their request to attend a meeting via audio or audiovisual conferencing and the reasons set out in 1.1.

1.5. A Member attending via audio/audiovisual conferencing cannot chair a meeting unless all members participating are doing so via audio/audiovisual conferencing.

1.6. If the Chair is attending by audio/audiovisual conferencing, then the meeting must by resolution appoint a member physically present as the presiding member.

1.7. Members will be connected to the audio/audiovisual conferencing system prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1.8. Members will be entitled to participate as if they were physically present at the meeting.

1.9. In the case of secret ballots, the Member will provide their vote to the CEO in confidence, who will then place it into the ballot box.

1.10. Where Members are not able to view presentations being made at the meeting, they will be provided with copies of the presentations electronically, if available.

1.11. If Council is unable to accommodate a Member's request to audio/audiovisual conference, the Member will be advised in advance of the meeting.

2. General Responsibilities

2.1. Council is committed to facilitating access and participation in meetings by permitting members to be present and participate remotely via audio or audiovisual conferencing system if a specific need arises.

2.2. The CEO will ensure the provision of an adequate conferencing system at the location of the meeting, and information that enables members to attend.

2.3. Members are responsible for ensuring they have access to appropriate technology connections to attend via audio/audiovisual.

2.4. Members in attendance via audiovisual conferencing are to consider the appropriateness of their personal presentation and surrounding environment.

2.5. The Chair will confirm which participants are present at the commencement of the meeting.

2.6. A Member who is attending by audio or audiovisual means must advise the Chair if they are about to leave the meeting and advise the Chair immediately if they re-join the meeting.

3. Conflicts of interest

3.1. It is the responsibility of Members attending remotely to ensure they do not participate in an agenda item, or hear the discussion, if they have declared a conflict of interest in the matter.

3.2. The Member must ensure they declare the conflict and disconnect from the conferencing system at the appropriate time.

3.3. Where a Member has disconnected from the conferencing system due to a conflict of interest, the Chair must contact the Member as soon as the agenda item has concluded.

4. Confidentiality

4.1. Members attending a meeting via audio/audiovisual conferencing must:

4.1.1. Ensure that people who are not Members cannot see, overhear, or listen to the Member or the meeting;

4.1.2. Not record the meeting; and

4.1.3. Ensure that confidential papers are not accessible by any person who is not a member.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Code of Conduct for Members
- Elected Member Allowances and Expenses Policy
- Elected Member Casual Vacancies Policy

REFERENCES AND RELATED LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 2019* (NT)
- *Local Government (General) Regulations 2021* (NT)

POLICY DETAILS

OWNER	Chief Executive Officer	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	General Manager Finance and Governance
APPROVAL DATE	10 December 2024	NEXT REVIEW DUE	Term of 11th Council
RECORDS NUMBER	466093	COUNCIL DECISION	10/1657