

POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT IN COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

COUNCIL POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to support politicians to observe appropriate protocols when participating in Council events and using Council facilities, while ensuring Council activities, events and use of resources are conducted in a politically neutral and impartial manner.

This policy also aims to preserve public confidence in the integrity of Council by ensuring Council and Elected Members are, and are perceived to be, impartial in the administration and delivery of Council functions, services and events.

PRINCIPLES

- Council recognises the importance of maintaining public confidence in the impartiality and integrity of local government.
- Council seeks to ensure that its events, activities, communications and resources are administered in an impartial and politically neutral manner.
- Council events, festivals, ceremonies and celebratory events are an important part of community life. They create a sense of pride and belonging within Palmerston, showcase the talents and cultures of the community to a wider audience and bring people of different backgrounds together in celebration.
- They also present an opportunity for Council to develop collaborative partnerships with other levels of government to assist in advocating for investment and to raise awareness of infrastructure and service requirements.
- Council facilities are available for use by politicians for community events.

DEFINITIONS

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

TERM	DEFINITION
Candidate	Nominee standing for political office.
Council event	Any event, activity or program organised, delivered, funded or supported by Council.

TERM	DEFINITION
Council facilities	Means anything on Council controlled and owned land. It includes but is not limited to buildings, fencing, landscaping, street furniture, posts and signs, play equipment, parks, reserves, road and other infrastructure.
Government	Territory or Commonwealth Government
Politician	Northern Territory and Commonwealth Elected Members. This does not include a politician's electoral officer or candidates seeking election.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Impartial conduct and political neutrality

- 1.1. Council and its Elected Members are committed to maintaining political neutrality in the delivery of its functions, services, events and activities.
- 1.2. Council events and activities must be conducted in a manner that is, and is perceived to be, impartial, fair and free from partisan political influence.

2. Protocol for Council events

- 2.1. Where the event is wholly or partially funded by the Government:
 - 2.1.1. Politicians whose ministerial portfolios or electorates have a connection to the event may be invited to attend.
 - 2.1.2. Where appropriate, seating will be provided in accordance with the nature and requirements of the event and in the order of the Northern Territory Table of Precedence.
 - 2.1.3. Politicians are not permitted to transfer invitations without the express approval of Council.
 - 2.1.4. Politicians present will be recognised at the beginning of the event by the Master of Ceremonies, where appropriate.
 - 2.1.5. Politicians will be thanked and recognised for the funding they have provided for the event, where appropriate.
 - 2.1.6. Where appropriate, the relevant politician will be invited to make a short speech that will not expressly or implicitly promote or denigrate a political party or group or solicit membership to a party or group.
- 2.2. Where the event is not funded by Government:
 - 2.2.1. Politicians may be invited to attend and their presence may be recognised at the beginning of the event by the Master of Ceremonies, if appropriate.
 - 2.2.2. For events that are open to the public, politicians are welcome to attend in their capacity as members of the public, even in the absence of an invitation. This provision does not apply to events that are not open to the public.
 - 2.2.3. In either case where a politician is or is not specifically invited to an event but is in attendance, no material soliciting membership of a political party is permitted.

2.2.4. Politicians are expected to abide by nominated dress codes.

2.3. Conduct during elections:

2.3.1. Where writs have been issued for elections, local politicians at that level of Government will not be specifically invited to attend or participate in Council events, unless:

- there is a pre-existing obligation such as requirements of a funding agreement; or
- it is a civic event and it is protocol to invite them, for example to a Citizenship Ceremony.

3. Use of Council facilities

3.1. Council controlled and operated facilities such as community centres, halls, public open spaces and SWELL are available for public use and hire in accordance with City of Palmerston's Fees and Charges.

3.2. Politicians and candidates can use Council facilities for community-related events at their own expense and following the appropriate booking processes.

3.3. Politicians and candidates must not affix political or campaign materials to the exterior of Council facilities or in any public areas. Any materials displayed within Council facilities must be removed by the hirer at the conclusion of the facility hire.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Code of Conduct
- Council Policy - Caretaker

REFERENCES AND RELATED LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 2019* (NT)
- Northern Territory Table of Precedence

POLICY DETAILS

OWNER	CEO	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	General Manager Finance and Governance
APPROVAL DATE		NEXT REVIEW DUE	Once per term
RECORDS NUMBER	527369	COUNCIL DECISION	[Council Decision]