

TAMWORTH REGIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL

CODE OF MEETING PRACTICE

1. Dates and Times of Meetings

The Tamworth Regional Youth Council will meet on a monthly basis at a time convenient to members. If a meeting is cancelled due to lack of a quorum, the agenda items will be carried over to the next scheduled meeting.

The meeting will be held monthly on the last Thursday of the month from 4pm to 6pm in the Council Chambers on Level 4 of Ray Walsh House, 437 Peel Street, Tamworth

The Youth Secretary will complete an attendance register for all Youth Council meetings.

Meetings scheduled on school and public holidays will be held subject to availability of Youth Councillors.

2. Special Meetings

At least two Youth Councillors or the Director Liveable Communities may by written notice call a Special Meeting.

The notice must:-

1. Specify the date and time of the Special Meeting and the business to be transacted; and
2. Be delivered or sent electronically to the Team Leader, Inclusive Community and Director Liveable Communities in sufficient time to enable reasonable notice of the Special Meeting to be given to all Youth Councillors.

Inclusive Community staff must convene the Special Meeting as specified in the notice. Unless all Youth Councillors are present and unanimously agree to deal with any other matter, only the business specified in the notice is to be transacted.

3. Notice of Meeting

The Secretary will notify the Youth Council of a meeting, no later than two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled meeting date. The notice can be provided by telephone, email, SMS or post.

The Director Liveable Communities may include any matter on an agenda of a Youth Council meeting which he or she considers should be dealt with at the following Youth Council meeting.

4. Agenda for Meetings

Youth Councillors may raise during General Business, any matter which he or she would like placed on the agenda of the next Youth Council meeting.

Meeting agendas are to be approved by the Director Liveable Communities prior to distribution to Youth Council members.

Agenda items for meetings are to be received within ten (10) days prior to the next scheduled meeting. Agenda items and attachments will be forwarded to members with the Notice of Meeting. Items outside of the Agenda may be raised during 'General Business'. All members are entitled to one vote against each recommendation put forward to the Youth Council. The Youth Mayor will if necessary, have the casting vote. Any decisions of the Youth Council that require the expenditure of Council funds and/or an action by the Council will require a resolution of the Council.

5. Participant level of commitment

Youth Councillors will:

1. Attend Youth Council meetings once per month from 4pm – 6pm on the last Thursday of the month.
2. Attendance at meetings is expected from all Youth Council Members. During a period of twelve months, an unexcused absence of more than three (3) occasions may be deemed a reason for dismissal unless reasonable explanation is provided.
3. Attend extra meetings/events/functions (on occasion) including Council meetings when required.

6. Quorum

A quorum shall be the Youth Council Mayor plus any eight (8) members. The quorum and staff representatives must be present for all votes taken by the Tamworth Regional Youth Council.

7. Inability to obtain a quorum

If after 30 minutes from the scheduled starting time of any Ordinary or Special Meeting, a quorum cannot be obtained those Youth Councillors present can decide whether to:

1. Continue the meeting without presenting any motions until the next meeting; or
2. Adjourn the meeting to a date to be determined.

8. Matters put to Youth Council by Community or Organisations

Matters put to Youth Council by a community member/group or organisations should be submitted via the online form on the Tamworth Regional Council website. The form clearly outlines:

1. The name and contact details of the person/group/organisation seeking input from the Youth Council;
2. The issue/project/event/service etc; and
3. The information or actions that are being sought from the Youth Council.

The Youth Council will review the submission at the next meeting and decide whether it requires further information in the form of a presentation. If the Youth Council does not wish to have a presentation, a letter of response will be prepared by Business Support.

The Youth Council may request a presentation to be made at the next or a future meeting. If this is the case:

1. Those seeking input will be contacted by Business Support to arrange a time;
2. Presentations should be no more than 20 minutes in length including question time;
3. The presentation should be concise and clearly outline the level of involvement being sought from the Youth Council;

4. The Youth Council will respond verbally to matters being presented; and
5. Feedback on the input given by Youth Council must be provided in a timely manner.

9. Attendance by members of the public

Members of the public can only attend Youth Council meetings if they have received an invitation from the Youth Council, via the Team Leader, Inclusive Community.

Meeting Protocol

10. Order of Business for Youth Council Meetings

The general order of business for a Youth Council meeting shall be:

- Welcome
- Acknowledgement of Country
- Apologies and Leaves of Absence by Councillors
- Presentations by Public (Public Forum)
- Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- Disclosure of Interests
- Discussion of Agenda items
- Conclusion of the Meeting

11. Role of Youth Mayor

With assistance from Council Officers the Youth Mayor will:

- Chair Youth Council meetings, including:
 - Keeping meetings on track;
 - Ensuring all agenda items have been addressed;
 - Ensuring that everyone's voice is heard;
 - Encouraging full participation from all members;
 - Seeking clarification of points that have been made;
- Ensure that all tasks are evenly distributed, and actions are followed up;
- Support the Youth Council secretary in developing the agenda and Council's Business Support in ensuring the minutes are accurate;
- Represent the Youth Council at special community meetings/events; and
- Remain at all times impartial and unbiased when making decisions.

12. Role of Deputy Youth Mayor

With assistance from Council Officers the Youth Deputy Mayor will:

- Support the Youth Mayor as required;
- Assume all Youth Mayor responsibilities in the absence of the Youth Mayor;
- Represent the Youth Council at special community meetings/events; and
- Chair meetings if the Youth Mayor is unable to attend.

13. Role of Youth Council Secretary

With assistance from Council Officers (including Business Support staff), the Secretary will:

- Coordinate scheduling of meetings;
- Prepare and distribute the agenda and other correspondence, as necessary;
- Assist with the checking and distribution of meeting minutes;
- Keep an attendance register for all Youth Council meetings;
- Represent the Youth Council at special community meetings/events;
- Advise the Youth Council of any incoming correspondence and where required prepare a timely response; and
- Provide content for the Youth Council to be included on the Youthie social media page.

14. Conflicts of interest

A Youth Councillor must disclose any conflict of interest which that Youth Councillor has in an item of business before the item is address.

15. Minutes

At every Youth Council meeting the minutes of the preceding meeting(s) must be dealt with as follows:

1. A copy of the minutes must be delivered to each Youth Councillor no later than two (2) days before the next meeting;
2. Minutes are not to be made public and must not be discussed with the public until they are confirmed by the Youth Council and formally adopted by the elected Council; and
3. If no Youth Councillor indicates opposition, the minutes must be declared to be confirmed.

16. Introducing a motion

The procedure for moving any Motion is:

1. The mover must state the Motion without speaking to it.
2. The Motion must be seconded. If a Motion is not seconded, the Motion lapses.
3. The Chair asks if anyone opposes the Motion.
4. If anyone opposes the Motion then the Chair must call on the mover to speak FOR the motion. If no one opposes the motion, then it is put to vote.

5. After the mover has addressed the meeting, the seconder can choose whether to speak FOR the Motion or 'reserve his or her right to address the meeting'.
6. After the mover and seconder (if desired) has spoken the Chair must invite debate from anyone who wishes to speak to the Motion.
7. Speakers must alternate between those wishing to speak FOR and AGAINST.
8. Each Youth Councillor is only allowed to speak once,
9. If there is no one else to speak FOR a motion then the mover must speak to close the debate.
10. Then the Chair must put the Motion to the vote.
11. The Motion is declared carried or lost.

17. Debate must be relevant to the motion

1. Debate must always be relevant to the Motion.
2. If someone debates a matter that is irrelevant to the Motion the Chair must ask the speaker to confine the debate to the motion at hand.
3. If after being requested to confine the debate, the speaker continues to debate irrelevant matters, the Chair may direct the speaker to be seated and not speak further in respect of the Motion.

18. Voting Rights

1. All Youth Councillors will have equal voting rights.
2. Voting must take place in silence.
3. Voting on any matter is by show of hands.
4. Councillors and Council staff will not have voting right.
5. Youth Council will allow a proxy voting, that is, if a Youth Councillor cannot attend the Youth Council meeting, they can send their vote via another Youth Councillor, or the Team Leader, Inclusive Community

19. Tied Vote

In the event of a tied vote:

1. The debate will be continued and a request for additional information can be made if needed.
2. If additional information is not available on hand the motion may be deferred until next meeting.
3. After re-debate, the motion is put to vote again.
4. If there is still a tied vote the Youth Mayor will have an additional deciding vote.

20. Reporting relationships

The Youth Council's primary relationship will be to Council's Inclusive Community team.

21. Reports by Council Officers to Youth Council

Reports from Council officers should go through to the Team Leader, Inclusive Community and the Director Liveable Communities prior to being placed on the agenda for the next Youth Council meeting. Presentations from Council Officers should be no more than 20 minutes in length excluding question time. The presentation should be concise and clearly outline the level of involvement being sought from Youth Council. The Youth Council will respond to Council officer's reports verbally at the Youth Council meeting.

All Council officers presenting a report to Youth Council should provide timely feedback on the input given by Youth Council.

22. Expected behaviour

1. Be mindful of your actions within the community and uphold the positive image and reputation of Tamworth Regional Youth Council.
2. Behave in a professional manner.
3. Show respect to other Youth Council and Council members and their views.
4. Refrain from making personalised comments about other Youth Councillors, officers or other people.
5. Actively listen to others' points of view.
6. Only one Youth Councillor will speak at any one time.
7. Youth Councillors should indicate if they would like to speak with their hands raised.
8. The Chairperson should monitor the flow of the conversation.
9. Youth Councillors' comments are directed to the whole council and should be relevant to the agenda item being discussed.
10. All members of the Youth Council should endeavour to make the Youth Council meetings a comfortable and friendly environment.

23. Youth Council's response to poor behaviour

Behaviour is defined as poor when a member of the Youth Council does not comply with the expectations outlined above. If a Youth Councillor is behaving poorly, they will be given a warning by either an Inclusive Community staff member or the Youth Mayor. The Director Liveable Communities is delegated to ask participants to leave the program if they continue to behave poorly or if they do not meet the expectations of their role.

24. Problem solving and dispute resolution

Any complaint, unresolved problem or serious dispute that involves Youth Councillors or Inclusive Community staff is to be brought to Council's Team Leader, Inclusive Community and reported to the Director Liveable Communities for resolution. If appropriate and with the agreement of all parties, the matter may involve a mediation process.

25. Smoking, alcohol, and other drugs

Youth Councillors will refrain from consuming alcohol or illegal drugs while they are fulfilling their role on Youth Council.

Smoking is not permitted in Council buildings or in Council vehicles or in close proximity to Council buildings. Youth Councillors will ensure that they do not smoke while wearing the Youth Council uniform/badge. They will also refrain from smoking in front of young people or children when they are fulfilling their role as Youth Councillors. Youth Councillors will abide by state government regulations around smoking in public places.

26. Gifts

Youth Councillors will not accept gifts either in their role as Youth Councillor or where it could be perceived to influence them in their role as a Youth Councillor except:

- Where the gift would generally be regarded as only having a token value and could not be perceived to influence their actions as a Councillor; or
- Where refusal may cause offence or embarrassment, in which case Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) will accept the gift on behalf of the Youth Council and the gift becomes the property of the Tamworth Regional Council.

27. Communication with the media

The Director Liveable Communities and Team Leader, Inclusive Communities are authorised to represent and speak on behalf of the Youth Council in any media.

Any other Youth Councillor who is requested by the media (or wishes) to speak to the media on behalf of the Youth Council can only do so with the approval of the Director Liveable Communities.

28. Uniform and Name Badges

Council uniforms and badges are given to Youth Councillors within 3 months of commencement. The Youth Council uniform and badge is consistent with Council's uniform policy and style guide.

The Youth Council uniform may be worn to all Youth Council meetings and functions. The Youth Councillors will dress in neat and tidy attire when they represent the Youth Council. School uniform is also considered appropriate dress when representing the Youth Council.