
MN09-02/25 Cr Wright - Position Statement on Political Figures and Political Parties

File Ref: 14553V017 – 25/65892
Author: Cr Jordan Wright
Action Officer: Chief Executive Officer
Disclosure of Interest: Nil
Attachments: Nil

Issue

To introduce the Council's first Policy Statement which seeks to clarify matters involving political figures and political parties.

Background

The City of Wanneroo strives to maintain a politically neutral stance, ensuring fairness and transparency in all its dealings. Currently, there is no formalised position statement guiding interactions with political figures and parties. This lack of a clear framework can lead to inconsistencies and potential misunderstandings, particularly during election periods. A dedicated discussion paper exploring the creation of such a position statement would provide valuable guidance for Administration and Council Members, promoting consistent and equitable practices. This will also assist in mitigating any perceived or real bias in the City's operations.

Detail

This motion seeks to address the need for a documented position statement concerning the City of Wanneroo's interaction with political figures and political parties. The discussion paper should explore best practices and legal considerations, drawing upon examples from other local governments. It should also consider the potential challenges and opportunities associated with developing and implementing such a position statement.

The paper should further investigate the implications of caretaker conventions for State and Federal politicians, especially in regard to the resourcing of responses to MP enquiries. Current issues that cause confusion include the definition of 'exhibiting' at an event, the handling of requests for information during caretaker periods, and the acceptance of funding commitments outside of established planning frameworks.

Consultation

No consultation has occurred with Council Members or Administration but will be presented to the next Concept Forum for immediate discussion due to the upcoming Federal and State elections.

Comment

The timing of such a position statement is critical. Currently, issues are unfolding where candidates are being able to exhibit at City of Wanneroo events; recent examples include the Labor Candidate for Wanneroo being able to exhibit a stall at the Wanneroo Christmas Fiesta in early December 2024 and more recently the Liberal Candidate for Landsdale at the Landsdale Sunset Sounds event in late January 2025.

These exhibits allow candidates and members of parliament to encourage residents to support them in upcoming elections, encourage residents to sign petitions and fill in surveys which allow for data harvesting for political purposes and give away free prizes or branded

merchandise promoting their party or self. The City of Wanneroo as a local government authority needs to remain a-political and continue to support the community's aspirations and needs without involving itself with Members of Parliament or Political Candidates.

Council needs to provide a clear position on what is acceptable and unacceptable during caretaker modes and elections as well as what business as usual looks like.

Statutory Compliance

Nil

Strategic Implications

The proposal aligns with the following objective within the Strategic Community Plan 2021 – 2031:

7 ~ A well governed and managed City that makes informed decisions, provides strong community leadership and valued customer focused services

7.1 - Clear direction and decision making

Risk Appetite Statement

In pursuit of strategic objective goal 7, we will accept a Medium level of risk as the City balances the capacity of the community to fund services through robust cost-benefit analysis and pursues evidence-based decision making to be effective stewards of the Council and City for future generations.

Risk Management Considerations

Risk Title	Risk Rating
ST-S23 Stakeholder Relationships	Medium
Accountability	Action Planning Option
Chief Executive Officer	Manage

Policy Implications

This Notice of Motion seeks to establish a formal policy position in respect of political figures and political parties.

The Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates Code of Conduct sets out expected standards in respect of representation of the City and interaction with third parties.

Financial Implications

Nil

Changes to Reports arising from Agenda Briefing

This Motion on Notice was not presented or discussed to Agenda Briefing.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Moved Cr Wright, Seconded Cr Rowe**That Council:-**

1. **REQUESTS Administration prepare a discussion paper for Council to consider, outlining options for the creation of a position statement on Political Figures and Political Parties;**
2. **REQUESTS this discussion paper be presented to a Concept Forum for discussion with Council Members within 4 months; and**
3. **REQUESTS the final position statement be presented to the next available Ordinary Council Meeting in line with the Council Policy Framework Policy and Ordinary Council Meetings and Forums of Council Policy after the forum for endorsement.**

**CARRIED
12/1**

For the motion: Mayor Aitken, Cr Bedworth, Cr Berry, Cr Coetzee, Cr Figg, Cr Herridge, Cr Miles, Cr Parker, Cr Rowe, Cr Seif, Cr Smith and Cr Wright

Against the motion: Cr Huntley

Absent: Cr Moore and Cr Nguyen

Administration Comment

Pending Council's decision on this Motion on Notice, Administration will prepare a discussion paper as requested.

Attachments: Nil