Policy document

Local Meeting Guidelines

This Policy sets out the considerations that guide the Independent Planning Commission in relation to the conduct of Local Meetings. It should be read in conjunction with the Commission's Public Submission Guidelines.

PURPOSE

As part of its determination of State significant development applications the Independent Planning Commission will typically conduct further submission processes, in addition to the legal requirement for community participation already carried out on its behalf by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure at the time of exhibition.

The Commission will always accept written submissions on matters on which it is deliberating, and may, in certain circumstances, also invite verbal submissions from the public by holding Individual Stakeholder Meetings, Local Meetings or a Public Meeting. The Minister may also choose to direct the Commission to conduct a Public Hearing as part of determining the application.

These Guidelines relate to the Commission's Local Meeting process.

WHAT IS A LOCAL MEETING?

A Local Meeting is a focused, wholly in-person meeting between a member of the community and the Commission Panel. The speaker sits across a table from the Panel and makes an individual verbal submission, followed by the next speaker. These individual meetings are open to the public to observe in person (subject to any capacity constraints at the venue).

This format is designed to hear from local community members that would be directly affected by the noise, visual impacts, air quality, traffic and transport, economic and other impacts associated with the proposed development.

Local Meetings provide longer speaking slots in a smaller setting, ensuring that the experience of nearby residents is given due consideration in the Commission's deliberations.

Who can speak at a Local Meeting?

A Local Meeting is designed to hear exclusively from people in the locality who may directly experience any relevant significant impacts. These would usually be people who work or live in the vicinity of the proposed development or where its direct offsite impacts will be experienced.

The size, scope and boundary of the affected locality may vary depending on the scale, nature and location of the proposed development, but would typically align with the "social locality" as identified in the assessment of the application under section 3.4 of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's *Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State significant projects* (July 2025).

How can people from outside the locality be heard?

Holding a Local Meeting does not mean that the Commission's decision will focus exclusively or disproportionately

on the proposed development's impacts on the locality. The Commission's deliberations will still be informed by any written submissions received from any person, irrespective of whether they are inside or outside the locality.

The Commission does not consider the format in which a submission is made (e.g. whether it is made in writing or in person) in weighing the submissions it receives.

When will a Local Meeting be held?

There is no statutory requirement for the Commission to hold a Local Meeting before determining an application.

Local Meetings are typically considered when between 50 and 100 submissions are received at exhibition. They are particularly suitable when the overall number of submissions made to the Department at exhibition was high but local voices were not well-represented.

Appeal rights

A Local Meeting held by the Commission does not affect any rights of appeal to the Land and Environment Court in respect of any future determination of that application.

WHEN A DECISION HAS BEEN MADE BY THE COMMISSION TO HOLD A LOCAL MEETING

When and where a Local Meeting will be held

So that Commissioners can see and hear local issues firsthand, Local Meetings will be held in the locality of the proposed development at the time when the Commission is visiting the area to undertake a site inspection and locality tour.

Notification of the Local Meeting

The Commission will generally give a minimum of two weeks (14 days) notice of a Local Meeting.

The Commission will give notice of the Local Meeting via an advertisement published on its website and social media channel/s. It will also issue a media release to news outlets in the local area where the development is proposed. Where it has valid email addresses, the Commission will notify via direct email all persons who had previously made a submission to the Department, as well as the local Mayor and relevant State and Commonwealth local members of parliament.

A Local Meeting schedule, listing the names and organisations of all registered speakers, will be posted on the Commission's website after registrations close and at least 24 hours before the Local Meeting.

Observation

Local Meetings are a series of individual meetings but are not private meetings – they are open to the public to observe in person (subject to any capacity constraints at the venue). Each registered person is also permitted to bring one support person to sit with them when the registered speaker gives their submission to the Panel.

Every person observing the Local Meeting is expected to be silent while registered speakers or Panel members are speaking. Any observer causing any form of disruption may be directed to leave the venue by the Panel or Commission staff.

Local Meetings are not livestreamed on the Commission's website, nor are they open to attendance via Zoom link, but they are audio-recorded with a full transcript of the Local Meeting published on the Commission's website.

If you wish to speak at a Local Meeting

To register your interest to speak at a Local Meeting, you must complete the speaker registration on the Commission's website prior to the advertised closing date.

The Commission does not provide an option for online participation in a Local Meeting – Local Meetings are intended to be entirely in-person processes.

If you register to speak at a Local Meeting, the Commission may ask you to verify that you live or work in the locality of the proposed development or its direct impacts. If you are unable to provide the requested verification, the Commission may choose to not accept your registration and redirect you to making a written submission instead.

Speakers at Local Meetings will be allocated 10 minutes to speak. Should you wish to speak for longer, you can make a request for additional time at any time before the closing date for registrations.

Any such request must be made by email to submissions@ipcn.nsw.gov.au and must:

- be made directly by the speaker requesting additional time;
- identify the speaker seeking the additional time including any group or organisation that the speaker will represent in giving their submission;
- indicate the length of additional time sought; and
- give detailed reasons justifying the request for additional time.

The Panel Chair, in his or her discretion, may agree to your request (in full or in part) or decline your request. You may be notified of the Panel Chair's decision either by direct communication or in the speaker schedule published by the Commission.
Although the Commission will try to hear from as many people as possible at the Local Meeting, it may not be possible for everyone who wishes to speak to have the opportunity to do so.

AT THE LOCAL MEETING

The Commission does not present information at a Local Meeting. The meeting is instead an opportunity for the Commission Panel to hear verbal submissions directly from people in the locality about issues of concern to them. Although Commissioners may ask questions or seek clarification from registered speakers, this is generally not necessary.

The Applicant and representatives of the Department are not invited to speak at Local Meetings. Speakers and observers at Local Meetings are encouraged to access relevant reports, information and transcripts published the Commission's website before attending.

Participating in a Local Meeting

The Commission provides guidance about appropriate conduct at Local Meetings to all registered speakers, who are expected to be familiar with that guidance and comply with it. A copy of that guidance is at Annexure A to this Policy.

The general running of the Local Meeting is within the discretion of the Panel Chair, including:

- permitting the substitution of speakers
- granting additional time for a speaker at the Local Meeting
- granting a late application to speak
- ensuring compliance with the *Guidance for Registered Speakers and Attendees* at Annexure A to this Policy
- stopping a person from speaking if he or she is making offensive, threatening or defamatory statements. This includes where a speaker names or singles out a particular person or group's view

Registered speakers are not permitted to interact with the observers during their verbal submission – for example, asking for a 'show of hands' or otherwise requesting any observers indicate their views.

When will the Commission cancel a Local Meeting?

As Local Meetings are held at the discretion of the Commission, already scheduled Local Meetings may also be cancelled by the Commission in certain circumstances.

Usually, this will occur after the close of speaker registrations in circumstances:

- when there are no registrations to speak at the Local Meeting; or
- where the Panel determines that alternative stakeholder engagement methods are likely to be a more effective use of resources than a Local Meeting.

TRANSPARENCY

Meeting transcript

In the interests of openness and transparency, all Local Meeting proceedings will be recorded with a transcript published on the Commission's website within a reasonable time.

Media

Representatives from the media may be present at a Local Meeting. Media representatives are not permitted to record proceedings (both audio and video recording is prohibited) and the transcript published by the Commission is the official record of the Local Meeting. Media representatives in attendance may take photographs of the Panel as long as this is done in a respectful manner and does not disrupt proceedings.

Records and documents

Presentations, submissions and any other notes provided to the Commission on a proposed development will be made publicly available on the Commission's website. The Commission's Privacy Statement explains the way we obtain, use and manage your personal information. This Statement covers everyone who submits information to the Commission.

Annex A

Guidance for registered speakers

Local Meetings are held at the discretion of the Commission for the purpose of informing Panels about the applications they are considering.

Please review the Local Meeting Guidelines before attending.

When speaking at a Local Meeting, please:

- present submissions that are factually accurate or contain opinions which you honestly hold
- limit your submission to matters relevant to the Commission's functions (please see page four of the Commission's Public Submissions Guideline for more information)
- do not share any confidential or personal information without the consent of the person whose information you intend to share
- do not use your submission to make complaints or allegations about individuals or the Commission's processes – there are separate processes for this (please see the Commission's Complaints Management Policy)
- do not engage in any threatening, abusive, defamatory or disrespectful conduct – the Commission is a statutory body exercising significant powers that affect people's lives and does not tolerate unacceptable conduct
- follow all directions from the Panel or Commission staff.

Please note that:

- your submission will be recorded, transcribed and broadcast along with your name and any group you may be representing
- any visual material you would like to be displayed during your submission should be provided at least 5 days prior to the Local Meeting in a single PDF or MS PowerPoint file. The Commission may decide not to display any visual material – if that happens, you can still provide it as a submission before the relevant deadline. Please do not include any confidential or personal information in any visual material provided to the Commission
- if you reach the time limit for your submission you may ask for additional time. If the Panel Chair declines to give more time, or if the Panel Chair directs you to stop before the time limit, you must end your submission: if this happens, you can provide the rest of your submission in writing
- Local Meetings are not intended to be information sessions for the community or opportunities to make complaints about an applicant or a government department. The Panel may, at any time, stop a person's verbal submission or bring an end to the Local Meeting and request the speaker instead provide their submission in writing
- speakers at Local Meetings do not have any additional legal protections and speakers are responsible for the content of their submissions.