



# Central Goldfields Shire Council Community Forums Guidelines

## Introduction

Central Goldfields Shire Council has set up Community Forums to hear what you think we need to do on key issues which relate to our community and our goal of achieving a prosperous and sustainable future for all our residents.

Community Forums are for discussion purposes only and are not structured as an official meeting of the Council for decision making.

Membership of this forum is open to the Central Goldfields community. The Central Goldfields community is made up of people who live, work, visit or invest in the Central Goldfields municipality.

## What are some of the benefits Community Forums bring?

Community Forums provide Council with the benefit of listening to and learning what people think therefore enabling it to make informed decisions, taking all ideas into account.

The experiences will help our community to;

1. Cultivate the conditions for moving forward together.
2. Discover common hopes and aspirations.
3. Realise the potential that exists for shared action and achieving together.
4. Rediscover a sense of unity with other members of the community.
5. Create collective wisdom about what "works".

## Guiding Principles

1. We welcome any and all contributions that stimulate discussion on the issue which is being discussed. We encourage debate and hope for a lively exchange of views.
2. Conversation belongs to everyone. We expect all participants to treat each other with respect and courtesy.
3. We are interested in the quality of the discussion not the interests of one individual, group or idea over another.
4. We expect that all contributions be relevant.
5. Contributions must not be off-topic, defamatory, abusive, harassing or hateful or include any abusive, obscene, indecent or offensive language.
6. In addition, comments must not endorse commercial products or activities or solicit business or invade anyone's privacy.

## Operational Guidelines

1. The guidelines for the conduct of Community Forums have been created to provide clarity in respect to the process and ensure the forums are conducted in an equitable and productive manner that benefits both the Council and the community.
2. All Councillors will be invited to attend together with the CEO and Directors.
3. Topics will be identified in advance by Council having regard to the issues in the Council Plan and other relevant and topical matters.
4. Community partners and other agencies may be invited by Council to participate in particular forums relevant to their function or activity.
5. Special consideration will be given to strategies for engaging youth to participate.
6. In identifying each topic, Council will also formulate clarifying questions which in its view most effectively seek the views of the community. These will not be publicly circulated to avoid limiting or constraining conversation or community input, but may be used as a reference point by the Mayor or Chairperson to maintain focus and direction.
7. Details of the Community Forums will be published in advance. Initially topics will be set on a month to month basis as Council assesses the effectiveness of the Forums and considers changes required. Subsequently it is envisaged that topics would be set further in advance although the topic for the day is always subject to notified change if more pressing or urgent matters arise.
8. Community Forums will be held monthly on the first Wednesday of the month from 5.00pm-6.00pm.
9. Residents meet with Council in a relaxed environment over tea/coffee and discuss the issues at hand.
10. The venue for Community Forums will vary. Opportunities will be taken to meet in various locations around the Shire and in community hub or centre settings wherever possible. The key objective is to create a welcoming environment.
11. The Mayor or Chairperson will state the topic and a summary of the topic or key issues for consideration and the key rules of engagement. Added information or context material may be provided by the Mayor or Chairperson, another Councillor, the CEO or Director.
12. Each person will be free to present their views. They should commence by stating their name and the location within the shire in which they reside or do business. They are free to talk for no longer than five minutes. The Mayor or Chairperson will remind the speaker after four minutes of the time so they may address any closing comments.
13. Councillors will have the opportunity to ask questions.
14. Each person's ideas will be recorded in summary. The ideas will be collated and circulated to Councillors. Hard copies will be available from the Shire office or available online at Council's website [www.centralgoldfields.com.au](http://www.centralgoldfields.com.au)
15. The Mayor or Chairperson will close each Community Forum at its conclusion and thank everyone for their input.
16. It is intended that the process of Community Forums be developing and dynamic. New learnings should be used to create further opportunities.