



MINUTE OF THE MAYOR

Dated: 23 September 2019

RE: Use of Mobile Phones During Council Meetings

At our Councillor refresher training with Local Government NSW last week I was interested to hear the facilitator talk about how other councils have banned the use of phones during meetings and the discussion among our Councillors that followed.

Section 15.20 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice proscribes that Councillors, Council staff and members of the public must ensure that mobile phones are turned to silent during meetings of Council and committees of Council.

However, even on silent, the constant use of a phone during a meeting is distracting for other Councillors. The use of mobile phones during meetings appears unprofessional to both the public in the gallery and people watching the webcast and gives the impression that Councillors are not focused on the job.

Ideally, we would all leave our phones in our pockets or bags for meetings so that we can give full attention to the agenda and the points raised by other councillors during discussions. However, if Councillors need to be able to take an urgent call for personal reasons, they need to keep their mobile phone on the desk.

I am therefore proposing that we amend the Code of Meeting Practice to specify that mobile phones must be turned to silent and that Councillors who need to phone or text during a Council meeting leave the chamber to do so.

This measure will help ensure that Councillors remain focused throughout a meeting and send the message to our community that we are giving our undivided attention to matters that are important to them.

The amendment is considered minor and as such does not require public exhibition.

I therefore recommend:

1. THAT Council amend Section 15.20 of the Code of Meeting Practice to say Councillors, Council staff and members of the public must ensure that mobile phones are turned to silent during meetings of Council and committees of Council. Councillors that need to use their phone to text, talk or engage in social media activity must leave the Chamber to do so.

**COUNCILLOR JILLY GIBSON
MAYOR**