



COOTAMUNDRA GUNDAGAI REGIONAL COUNCIL PUBLIC INQUIRY

GENERAL PRACTICE DIRECTION

Note: In this document:

- (a) “CGRC” means Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council
- (b) “Inquiry” means the CGRC Public Inquiry
- (c) “Inquiry Website” means:
<https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public-inquiries/Cootamundra-Gundagai>
- (d) “Inquiry Email Address” means: cootamundra.gundagai@olg.nsw.gov.au
- (e) “Inquiry Postal Address” means Office of the Commissioner, CGRC Public Inquiry, Locked Bag 3015, Nowra NSW 2541

GENERAL

1. This practice direction is intended to provide guidance as to the procedures that the Commissioners intend to adopt in the ordinary course of the Inquiry. Where the Commissioners thinks it appropriate, the procedures outlined below may be dispensed with or varied.

VENUE AND DATE OF THE PUBLIC INQUIRY

2. The Public Hearings held as part of the Inquiry will take place at times and places to be announced. The opening of Public Hearings is scheduled to commence in Sydney at The Sydney Masonic Centre, 66 Goulburn Street Sydney on 30 August 2024 (for opening statements, to hear from the author of the implementation plan and for any necessary directions). Hearings will then continue on dates to be announced.
3. The Commissioners may at their discretion on any hearing day set the sitting hours.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION AND AUTHORISATION TO APPEAR

Application for legal practitioner to represent a witness while giving evidence

4. Where a legal practitioner seeks authorisation to appear before the Inquiry for the limited purpose of representing an individual while that individual is giving evidence at the Public Hearings, an application is to be made orally immediately prior to the individual being called to give evidence and will be then determined by the Commissioner.

Applications for authorisation to appear in all other cases

5. Paragraphs 6 to 14 apply in any case other than that described in paragraph 4 above.
6. Any person, including any legal practitioner, wishing to obtain authorisation to appear at the Public Hearings should apply in writing to the Inquiry in the form of the application annexed to this Practice Direction. Any such application should be sent by email to the Inquiry Email Address or by post to the Inquiry Postal Address in sufficient time that it is received by close of business 2 days before the hearing date.
7. The Commissioners will make a ruling on the application and notify the applicant of the decision.
8. The Public Hearings are unlikely to be delayed for the purpose of considering and determining an application for authorisation which is not the subject of a written application provided in accordance with the preceding paragraph.
9. However, nothing in the above practice directions prevents a person from seeking authorisation to appear at any time before or during the Public Hearings if something occurs which leads the person to believe that the person's interests may be materially affected. Such an application should address the matters identified in the form of application annexed to these practice directions and will be determined at a time considered appropriate by the Commissioner.
10. Unless the Commissioners otherwise determines, any authorisation to appear granted by the Commissioner is granted on the following conditions:
 - (a) Authorisation may be withdrawn by the Commissioners, or made subject to altered or additional limitations or conditions at any time.

- (b) The nature and extent of the participation of the authorised person in the Public Hearings is subject to the Commissioners' control from time to time.
 - (c) The authorised person has no automatic right to examine any witness. Amongst other things, the Commissioners may, depending on the circumstances at the relevant time, direct that there should be no examination of a particular witness by the authorised person, or that any examination shall be limited as to topic, time or otherwise.
 - (d) The authorised person is expected to follow the practice and other directions of, and rulings from, the Commissioners, and not to disrupt the proceedings.
11. The Commissioners will determine the nature and extent of any other conditions attaching to any grant of authorisation taking into account all relevant considerations.

Prior notification required to be given of certain matters

12. Any person, including any legal practitioner, authorised by the Commissioners to appear at the Public Hearings (Authorised Person) who proposes to apply to call any person as a witness (whether to give evidence in rebuttal of the evidence of another witness, or otherwise) must make a written application to the Inquiry, identifying the person by name, providing short reasons why the person should be called to give evidence and attaching a copy of a statement, signed by that person, setting out the evidence that person would give to the Inquiry. The Commissioners will make a ruling on the application and notify the applicant of the decision at a time they considers appropriate.
13. Each Authorised Person should give the Inquiry written notice of the following matters as soon as possible:
- (a) if the Authorised Person proposes to request permission to call any person as a witness to give evidence at the Public Hearings: a copy of a statement, signed by that person, whose name must also be clearly printed, setting out the evidence that person would give if called to give evidence;
 - (b) any issues of law which the Authorised Person proposes to raise accompanied by a short outline of submissions; and
 - (c) any procedural matter the Authorised Person proposes to raise (including, by way of example only, any objections to evidence, confidentiality issues, non-publication concerns and administrative arrangements) accompanied by a short outline of submissions.

14. Written notice provided under paragraphs 12 and 13 above should clearly state the identity of the Authorised Person and should be sent by email to the Inquiry Email Address or by post to the Inquiry Postal Address by no later than close of business 2 days prior to the hearing.

Conduct of the Public Hearings – witnesses

15. Subject to the control of the Commissioners, counsel assisting will determine which witnesses are called at the Public Hearings and the order in which they are called and examined. It may on some occasions be necessary to call some witnesses to give evidence on more than one occasion.
16. Prior to the commencement of the Public Hearings, the Inquiry may publish on the Inquiry Website a list of witnesses who have been granted leave to give evidence, and whether that evidence will be called orally, or by written statement. Reasonable endeavours will be made to indicate the likely order that witnesses will be called, but circumstances may lead to witnesses being called in a different order than listed on the Inquiry Website.
17. As a general rule, any person who has been granted leave or summoned to give evidence at the Public Hearings will be requested to provide a witness statement to the Inquiry in advance of the person giving evidence at the Public Hearings. In some instances it may be possible for staff of the Inquiry to assist with the preparation of any written statement.
18. Where a witness has provided a written statement, a copy of that statement will be made available to any person the Commissioners or counsel assisting considers may be substantially and directly interested or affected by the evidence prior to that witness being called at the Public Hearing.
19. In situations in which it is understood that a witness will give oral evidence without having provided a written statement, any submission that person has made to the Inquiry will be available on the Inquiry Website and reasonable steps will be taken to provide a list of the topics it is understood will be addressed in the evidence of that witness to any persons the Commissioner considers might have a substantial and direct interest in the evidence of the witness.
20. All witnesses will be called to give evidence by counsel assisting, and then examined by counsel assisting. If leave is granted by the Commissioners, the witness may then be examined by or on behalf of any person considered by the Commissioners to have a sufficient interest to do so. If leave is granted by the Commissioners, the witness may then be examined by his or her own legal representative. If leave is granted, counsel assisting may then re-examine the witness.

21. Given the limited number of hearing days, any person who is granted leave to examine a witness will be expected to proceed with that examination without delay after the witness has first been examined by counsel assisting. There should be no expectation that there will be any adjournment after the witness has been examined before further examination or by other persons takes place.
22. The Commissioners may impose time limits on the length of any examination, and may limit the topics upon which a witness may be examined. The Commissioner will not allow a witness to be examined multiple times on the same topic unless good reason for doing so can be demonstrated.

Conduct of the Public Hearings – documents

23. Subject to the control of the Commissioners, counsel assisting will determine which documents are tendered, and the time at which they will be tendered.
24. Prior to the commencement of the Public Hearings, or prior to any particular witness being examined, the Inquiry may provide to persons that may be directly interested or affected by the subject matter of the Inquiry with copies of certain documents that will be or are likely to be tendered as exhibits in the Public Hearings.
25. Any person wishing to tender a document must notify the Inquiry by providing a copy of the document prior to the commencement of the Public Hearings. Subject to the control of the Commissioners, counsel assisting will decide whether or not to tender the document. An application may be made directly to the Commissioners to tender a particular document if the above procedure has been complied with.

Publication of Transcript

26. A transcript of evidence will be available from the Inquiry Website.

Submissions

27. At the conclusion of the evidence, oral submissions may be allowed if time permits. Otherwise, orders will be made for the making of written submissions. Counsel assisting will make submissions first. An opportunity will then be given to any person whom the Commissioners considers is directly interested or potentially materially affected by those submissions to make their own submissions. The Commissioners will determine whether such submissions are to be made orally or in writing.

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28. Limits will be placed on the length of time granted for oral submissions, and the length of any written submissions.

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APPLICATION FOR AUTHORISATION TO APPEAR

Part 1 – Name and contact details	
Name:	<i>[Name of the person seeking authorisation to appear, or the name of the person who proposes to be represented by a legal practitioner (as the case may be)].</i>
Address:	
Contact person:	
Telephone:	
Fax:	
Email:	
Part 2 – Name and contact details of legal practitioner	
Name:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
Fax:	
Email:	
Details of instructing solicitors:	
Name:	
Address:	
Contact person:	
Telephone:	
Fax:	
Email:	

Part 3 – Terms of reference

Which particular term or terms of reference does the person in question claim to have an interest?

Part 4 – Nature and extent of interest

In respect of each term of reference identified in answer to Part 3, what is the nature and extent of the person’s asserted interest in that matter?

Part 5 – Assistance to the Inquiry

a) Will the person appearing or to be represented be in a better position to assist the Inquiry if authorisation to appear is granted? If so, how?

b) Please specify precisely the nature and extent of any assistance that will be provided to the Inquiry if authorisation is granted?

Part 6 – Conflicts

In the case of an application for authorisation for a legal practitioner to appear, does the practitioner (and in the case of Counsel, his or her instructing solicitors) act for any other person in relation to the Inquiry and the matters it is inquiring into? If so, what information can be provided to the Inquiry such as to enable the Commissioner to determine whether it is appropriate for authorisation to be granted?

Part 7 – Submissions

What submissions do you wish to make, and what other matters do you wish to rely upon, in support of the application for authorisation?

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