

Order of Precedence/Hosting of Dignitaries Policy

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Policies superseded by this policy:	Not applicable		
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Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance		
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1. Purpose

This policy has been developed to define the order of precedence at Council sponsored and organised events and functions and enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of the official proceedings at such events. It also provides guidelines for:

- acknowledging, addressing and seating Councillors, executive staff, dignitaries and guests at Council-organised functions and events; and
- acknowledging, addressing and seating Councillors and executive staff at external events.

2. Background

Both Federal and State Governments in Australia generally have an Order of Precedence Protocol to consistently guide the ceremonial status of arrangements and the correct order in which introductions, acknowledgements and seating arrangements are to be made.

Greater Dandenong City Council sponsors and organises numerous meetings, ceremonies and events each year and extends invitations to VIP's, dignitaries and guests of honour. Given Greater Dandenong Council's participation in, and organisation of, many varied events in and around the municipality, it is prudent to provide a consistent approach to the acknowledgment of the Mayor and Councillors, VIPs, dignitaries and guests in attendance at Council functions and events. It is also prudent to consider the provision of guidelines to external groups when they are inviting the Mayor Councillors to attend external functions and events.

As there is no official protocol on the order of precedence at a Local Government level, this policy has been developed to define the order of precedence that should be followed at Council-sponsored and Council-run events.

This policy identifies the Mayor of the City of Greater Dandenong as the official representative of the municipality and as the host for all Council-organised events when in attendance. As a result, the Mayor should be ranked highest in the order of precedence despite the order listed under the protocols for both the State and Federal governments.

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The guidelines in this policy have been developed specifically for Council-organised events and external events to which the Mayor and Councillors are invited and should be used with a flexible approach.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all Council organised events in which the Mayor and Councillors, VIPs, executive staff and/or dignitaries may be in attendance;
- all Council sponsored events where Council contributions are greater than \$5,000. (e.g. the Springvale Lunar Festival, where the event is organised by an external organisation but Council's contribution exceeds \$5,000);
- external events at which the Mayor, Councillors or executive staff are attending.

Where the State or Federal Government are also a major sponsor of, or in attendance at, a Council-organised event, Council officers must liaise directly with the relevant Minister's office in relation to the Order of Precedence, however this policy will serve as the overarching guideline.

During the period preceding either a State or Federal Government election the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Premier and Cabinet Caretaker Convention Guidelines must be adhered to when considering public events either organised or sponsored by Council. During such periods, Council officers should ensure that Council's apolitical nature is upheld and parliamentarians are not invited to speak on any matters other than those relating to the event. No campaigning will be permitted at Council events during a Federal or State Election caretaker period.

4. Human Rights and Responsibilities Charter – Compatibility Statement

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities has been considered in the preparation of this Policy but is not relevant to its contents.

5. References

- Table of Precedence for the Commonwealth of Australia as Gazetted in Special Gazette No. S206 on Tuesday 5 October 1982.
- Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet Caretaker Convention Guidelines
- Department of Premier and Cabinet Caretaker Convention Guidelines

6. Definitions

- Order of Precedence** is a sequential hierarchy of perceived importance of people. It is most often used in the context of people by many organisations and governments for formal and state occasions and especially where diplomats are present. Note that a person's position in an order of precedence is not necessarily an indication of functional importance but rather an indication of ceremonial or historical relevance.
- Principal Speaker** is usually a VIP or dignitary especially invited to the event, such as the Premier or a Minister.
- Guest of Honour** is usually someone who is being honoured for their achievements or contributions to the event.

7. Council Policy

Order of Precedence at Greater Dandenong City Council-Organised Events

The Mayor is the official representative of the City of Greater Dandenong and, as such, should be recognised as the official host of all Council-organised events, if attending the event.

The Mayor should be introduced first at Council-organised events if in attendance, even in the presence of State and Federal elected Members of Parliament. In this instance the running sheet should be provided to any Members of Parliament attending to ensure the Order of Precedence proposed is acceptable to them. Common sense does need to prevail and at times the Order of Precedence may need to be changed based on the person, purpose and events at hand.

Assuming that a Member of the Royal Family is not present, the following order of precedence for speakers would normally apply to those attending:

1. Introduction by the Master of Ceremonies (MC);
2. Welcome by the Mayor;
3. Introduction of the principal speaker or guest of honour (by MC);
4. Main speech by principal speaker or guest of honour;
5. Speeches by other dignitaries;
6. Conclusion by MC;

Note that this may need to vary from time to time, for example when both State and Federal politicians are in attendance and speaking.



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Seating, Welcomes and Introductions

The order of precedence outlined in this policy applies equally to welcoming guests, seating arrangements and introductions of official parties at Council-organised events.

As a general rule for Council-organised functions and events, dignitaries should be recognised or welcomed in the following order:

- Mayor of the Municipality or Councillor representing the Mayor
- Premier of Victoria
- Ministers
- Members of Parliament
- Other Councillors
- Guests of Honour
- Council Executive
- Other guests

Where a significant community event within the municipality has been organised by Council, all Councillors present at the official ceremony should be seated prominently with any dignitaries, even if they are not speaking as part of the official proceedings.

Community Grant Sponsored Events

Where Council has contributed \$5,000 or above to a community event but Council is not the organiser, the order of precedence outlined in this policy should equally apply to the event and made part of the requirements of the grant.

External Community Events

Where the Mayor and Councillors or executive staff have been invited to an external community event within the municipality, the order of precedence may be altered to firstly acknowledge the officials within the organisation managing the event. The order of precedence for speakers may then be as follows:

1. Introduction by the Master of Ceremonies (MC);
2. Welcome by the host's official representative/patron;
3. Introduction to/welcome by the Mayor;
4. Introduction of the principal speaker or guest of honour (by MC);
5. Main speech by principal speaker or guest of honour;
6. Speeches by other dignitaries;
7. Conclusion by MC;

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As a general rule for external events, dignitaries should be recognised or welcomed in the following order:

- Host Organisation's Officials
- Premier of Victoria
- Mayor of the Municipality or Councillor representing the Mayor
- Ministers
- Members of Parliament
- Other Councillors
- Guests of Honour
- Council Executive

The order of precedence at external community events will take the form that the host organisation chooses, however, due honour and respect should be given to the Mayor as the first citizen of the municipality.

It is important to understand that external events and functions organised by State and Federal government departments are conducted under their own orders of precedence and in some instances, these events may not acknowledge the requirements of this policy when inviting Greater Dandenong City Council's Mayor, Councillors or executive staff to these events.

Important Points to Note

Note that in all instances, if the Prime Minister is in attendance, then they must always be welcomed or introduced first (before the Mayor).

Introductions or speeches by other dignitaries should take place in order of hierarchy (elected officials followed by appointed officials). If there is no distinction in hierarchy, then speeches/introductions should take place at the discretion of the event organiser in consultation with a council representative from the Governance Business Unit.

Although not recommended, on occasions it may be necessary to reverse the order of precedence so that the highest ranked officials/guests of honour are introduced last. This will depend on the format of the event however and should not be done without the consent of those who will be impacted or their representative.

A person acting on behalf of any of another dignitary shall enjoy the precedence of the person for whom he/she is acting with the understanding that, if there is more than one person holding the same level of stature as the person acting on behalf of another, then they will take precedence after other persons with the same stature who are attending in their own right.

State or Federal representatives invited to local functions might insist on being accorded the same degree of precedence they enjoy on a government list, so it is extremely important that questions of precedence be determined prior to any event.

Attendance and correct names, titles and pronunciation should be confirmed in advance to avoid offending participants.

If in doubt, please contact the Governance Business Unit on telephone 8571 5216 for advice.

8. Related Documents

- CGD's Civic Event Guide
- CGD's Plaques, Memorials and Interpretive Signage Policy
- Appendix 1 (to this document) - CGD's General Guide to the Order of Precedence at Local Functions and Events (Handout)

9. Appendix 1



QUICK GUIDE TO THE ORDER OF PRECEDENCE AT GREATER DANDENONG EVENTS

It is important that when conducting a function or event that due honour and respect is accorded to invited guests and dignitaries when determining seating and introduction arrangements.

As first citizen of the municipality and the elected representative of the ratepayers of the Greater Dandenong City Council, the Mayor, as a general rule, takes precedence at Council organised and sponsored local functions and events before any other person.

However, this order of precedence does not apply to official functions conducted by State or Federal Government departments. In this instance the State or Federal Member would take precedence.

As a general rule for Council-organised functions and events, dignitaries should be recognised in the following order:

- Mayor of the Municipality or Councillor representing the Mayor;
- Premier of Victoria
- Ministers;
- Members of Parliament;
- Other Councillors;
- Guests of Honour
- Council Executive
- Other Guests

Introductions and seating arrangements should be made in order of hierarchy. If there is no distinction in hierarchy after the Mayor then introductions, speeches and seating should take place at the discretion of the event organiser in consultation with a council representative from the Governance Business Unit.

If the Prime Minister is in attendance the order of precedence must be changed and they must be welcomed and introduced first.

If you have invited the Prime Minister, Premier or a Minister to your function, there are several protocols that may need to be observed during the event. Further guidance is best sought by contacting the relevant dignitaries office.

A person acting on behalf of any of another dignitary shall enjoy the precedence of the person for whom he/she is acting with the understanding that, if there is more than one person holding the same level of stature as the person acting on behalf of another, then they will take precedence after other persons with the same stature who are attending in their own right.

State or Federal representatives invited to local functions might insist on being accorded the same degree of precedence they enjoy on a government list, so it is extremely important that questions of precedence be determined prior to any event.

Federal and State Election Caretaker periods must be considered when planning Council organised or sponsored events at which Parliamentarians are invited to speak.

If you have any questions please contact the Office of the Mayor on 8571 5230 or Council's Governance Unit on 8571 5347 or read the entire policy at www.greaterdandenong.com. For a details regarding the Victorian Government's Order of Precedence protocols go to: www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/policies/protocol/victorian-table-of-precedence