

Keywords: *Policy*

Corporate Plan:	<i>Corporates Services (Asset management, Financial Management, Risk Management, Records, information Technology, Customer Service)</i>
Classification:	<i>Executive Services – Governance – “Policy Development”</i>
First Issued/Approved:	<i>June 2010</i>
Review Frequency:	<i><u>Good Governance Practice</u>: Annually</i>
Last Reviewed:	<i>8 August 2017</i>
Next Review Due:	<i>2018</i>
Responsible Officer(s):	<i>CEO</i>
Council File Reference:	<i>COUNCIL POLICIES (P)</i>
Applicable Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1999</i>
Relevant Policies:	<i>Applies to all policies</i>
Related Procedures:	<i>This policy is not subject to Public Consultation</i>
Delegations:	<i>Berri Barmera Council Delegations Register</i>

Purpose

Berri Barmera Council undertakes to:

- Develop, disseminate, and regularly review public policy statements that define its position on key issues.
- Ensure that these policy statements are developed in consultation with its constituent member bodies and key stakeholders.
- Maintain a distinction between Council policy areas (public policy statements) and operational policies (Internal use).
- Make public policy statements available on the Berri Barmera Council website in a timely manner and register them on a register of Berri Barmera Council policies.

Principles

This policy outlines the development process and dissemination for Berri Barmera Council public policy positions, policy statements and other policy documents (as distinct from internal policies and procedures).

DEVELOPMENT / FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY

Responsibility

Chief Executive Officer

- Will seek advice from the Council on issues that may require a policy to be developed and advise Council on the staff capacity to take on a new policy issue.
- Include any major new policy issues into the organisation's business plan.

- Provide background documents and relevant information in respect to a specific issue.
- Disseminate policy as determined.

Council

- Identify issues that require an organisational policy.
- Participate in policy development process in a timely manner.

Other

The delegated staff members will, under the direction of the CEO and in line with established timelines develop a draft policy after input has been received. A first and possibly second version will be completed after each version is reviewed.

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Appendix

PROCEDURE

Application

These procedures apply to the development and dissemination of both:

- **Proactive Berri Barmera Council policy**, i.e. policy positions, policy statements, and other policy documents on issues identified by the Berri Barmera Council as requiring an organisational policy.
- **Reactive Berri Barmera Council policy**, i.e. policy developed in response to consultation documents, policy statements, proposals, or other documents put forward by governments, non-government organisations, or other bodies.

Identification of issues for policy development

- For proactive Berri Barmera Council policy, the need for policy development on an issue will generally be identified by the Council and Management in the organisation's annual business plan, and will be in line with priorities outlined in the organisation's strategic plan. New issues may be proposed as issues by either of the Riverland Local Government Forum, or by other stakeholders. Should this occur, the CEO will seek the advice of the Council, either at a Council meeting or out of session through the Mayor, on whether Berri Barmera Council should develop policy in the area proposed. In making such decisions, the Council will consider the significance and relevance of the issue in relation to Berri Barmera Council's mission and strategic plan, and will take into account the CEO's advice on staff capacity to take on a new policy issue. Should new policy issues be added to the organisation's workload, the CEO may negotiate with the Council to make adjustments to the organisation's business plan (such as decisions to not complete other tasks listed in the organisation's business plan).
- For reactive Berri Barmera Council policy, the CEO will bring to the attention of the Council any documents which may require a Berri Barmera Council policy response. If the CEO is in any doubt as to whether Berri Barmera Council should respond, the CEO will seek the Council's advice on whether Berri Barmera Council should develop a policy response. Given the timeframes that generally apply in these situations, the Council's advice on this will generally be sought out of session. Should the Council support the development of a policy response, workload considerations will be taken into account and adjustments may be made to the business plan.

The process for policy development and dissemination

In developing either proactive or reactive policy, the following process will be adopted:

- The consultation process for developing Berri Barmera Council policy will generally include reporting and comment to/from Council members
- Unless the Berri Barmera Council CEO (or a delegated staff member) identifies to the Council members that there are confidentiality requirements in relation to the specific policy development process or any parts of the process (eg any document/s), the Council members may seek advice and input (eg from their members, staffers, or other stakeholders), as they see appropriate.
- Any Council member may declare an interest, and if they have a conflict of interest they will declare this and exclude themselves from a specific policy development process. Any Council member may ask the full Council to consider the appropriateness of excluding another participant from the process where they believe that participant has an undeclared conflict of interest; in such cases the Council members will take a vote and its decision will be final.

- The Berri Barmera Council CEO may exclude the staff members from a specific policy development process if their inclusion is not seen as appropriate. In such cases the CEO will advise the staff member/s of their non-inclusion.
- The CEO or delegated staff member will develop a first draft of a Berri Barmera Council policy document taking into account input/comments received.
- Following the cut-off date for further comment, the CEO or delegated staff member will develop a refined version of the Berri Barmera Council policy document taking into account all input and provide this to the Mayor for final comment and clearance. Where the issue is very complex or controversial, and where there is sufficient time, final comment and clearance will be sought from the full Council.
- In the process of developing the policy document, the CEO or delegated staff member will clearly outline to all participants the timeframes for the process. Council members will be provided as much time as practicable to provide input and comment. Where timeframes are very tight, it may not in all instances be possible to follow all steps outlined above; in such cases the CEO and Mayor may finalise policy documents after a quick round of input from Council members.
- The onus is on Council members, CEO and relevant staff to provide input, comment, and clearance by the clearly identified cut-off dates. Policy will not be revisited simply because of failure of any Council member, CEO or staff member to participate in the policy development process in a timely manner. The CEO or delegated staff member may provide additional reminders of due dates for responses, but is not required to do so.

All Berri Barmera Council policy statements will be dated, and reviewed within a specified period of time where appropriate.

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