

2 February 2026

Dear Mayor Funnell cc Julie Gardyne and Elected Members,

Freedom of Expression for Elected Members during Council Meetings

I want to clarify a procedural point regarding meeting agendas and **the ability for Elected Members to raise emerging or general matters during Council public meetings**, as this came up last year and may be of interest to all members. There is nothing in our Standing Orders that prevents this. In fact, the Standing Orders explicitly provide for it.

Standing Order 9.13 allows discussion of minor matters not on the agenda, provided the chair explains this at the beginning of the public part of the meeting. Such items are information-only and cannot result in a decision, other than referral to a future meeting.

Standing Order 9.12 and Appendix 11 also recognise urgent or extraordinary matters not on the agenda, where the chair explains why the item was not listed and why it cannot reasonably be delayed.

In addition, Appendix 10 includes “Mayor, deputy Mayor and elected members’ reports (information)” as a standard agenda item, which is clearly intended as a structured mechanism for members to raise matters for noting rather than decision. Indeed, until around 18 months ago this was a regular informal inclusion in every Council meeting during a section called ‘portfolio updates’, until the then Mayor decided to quench that opportunity. I have included a copy of Appendix 10 at the bottom of this letter.

Taken together, these provisions make it clear that a short, defined agenda slot for elected members to raise emerging issues for information only already sits within existing chair discretion. It does not require a Standing Orders amendment, nor does it undermine agenda discipline or decision-making safeguards.

What *is* undermined when no such mechanism exists - is transparency. Matters either go unheard, or have to be raised informally outside the public meeting process.

For these reasons, I believe **it is both appropriate and consistent with our Standing Orders for each ordinary meeting agenda to include a brief “Elected Members’ Matters (Information Only)” item**, with no resolutions other than referral if required. I raise this so that we are all working from the same understanding of the tools already available to us, and the context in which I am choosing to operate.

For completeness, I should also note my current position regarding **Notices of Motion**. Following the Council decision in October 2024 which now requires a seconder in advance to get an item on the agenda - a change supposedly introduced specifically to prevent individual members from tabling matters deemed ‘trivial’, but was clearly intended to quench inconvenient or uncomfortable topics being raised - I am choosing not to lodge any Notices of Motion unless another Elected Member is prepared to sight-unseen second them in advance (note that seconding does not mean agreement with the proposed item, it means only that the seconder agrees it deserves to be heard). Because in effect, that change in October

2024 means that in order to table an issue for debate, we now need the 'permission' of another Elected Member - which is not only an undermining of democracy, but is also out of sync with LGNZ guidelines. **I myself am happy to sight-unseen second any Notices of Motion, and encourage other Elected Members to take this same principled position.** This way we can sidestep this unwanted intrusion on our ability to table a matter of our choosing for discussion.

I believe that there is a reason to have elections, and that is to put people at the Council table to freely express their views. The voters who put us in here are owed that, and at the moment there is a hypocrisy at Taupo District Council whereby a member of the public has greater speaking rights than Elected Members (i.e. 5 min during public forum). So I am choosing to bring these matters to all of your attention now.

Thankyou,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Duncan Campbell', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Duncan Campbell  
Taupo District Council

## **Appendix 10: Sample order of business | Āpiti hanga 10: He tauira mō te whakaraupapatanga o ngā take**

### **Open section**

- (a) Apologies
- (b) Declarations of interest
- (c) Confirmation of minutes
- (d) Leave of absence
- (e) Acknowledgements and tributes
- (f) Petitions
- (g) Public input
- (h) Local and/or community board input
- (i) Extraordinary business
- (j) Notices of motion
- (k) Reports of committees
- (l) Reports of local and/or community boards
- (m) Reports of the chief executive and staff
- (n) Mayor, deputy Mayor and elected members' reports (information)

### **Public excluded section**

- (o) Reports of committees
- (p) Reports of the chief executive and staff
- (q) Mayor, deputy Mayor and elected members' reports (information)