



**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC FORUM
HELD ON 26 MARCH 2025**

1. Opening

The Public Forum commenced at 5.33pm.

2. Presentations relating to listed Items on the Council Agenda

Having declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9.1, Mayor Winchester vacated the Chair and left the Chamber at 5.34pm. The Deputy Mayor assumed the Chair.

The following presenters were heard:

	Name	Item no	Item description	For/Against
1	Jeremy Wyatt	9.1	DA.2024.0064 - Additions and Alterations to Commercial Building and Demolition (Heritage Listed Item) - 142 & 164 Monaro Street, Queanbeyan	For
2	Richard Nash	9.1	DA.2024.0064 - Additions and Alterations to Commercial Building and Demolition (Heritage Listed Item) - 142 & 164 Monaro Street, Queanbeyan	For

3. Petitions

There were no petitions submitted.

4. 'Questions on Notice' from the Public

Responses to the following 'Questions on Notice' received up to Wednesday, 19 March 2025, were provided and tabled at the meeting (see attached for responses):

Nos	Received from	In relation to:
1-5	Richard Graham	The 2023/24 QPRC Annual Report noting overseas trips by Council Managers during the reporting period.

5. Presentations by Invitation from the General Manager

There were no presentations.

6. Closure

As there were no further matters, the Public Forum closed at 5.41pm.



ATTACHMENT TO MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC FORUM HELD ON 26 March 2025

‘Questions on Notice’ from the Public

Responses to the following ‘Questions on Notice’ received up to Wednesday 19 March 2025 were provided and tabled at the meeting.

Questions submitted by: Richard Graham

The 23/24 QPRC annual report noted overseas trips by council managers during the reporting period.

1. In specific terms, what were the operational benefits to residents and ratepayers of each trip?

There were four overseas trips undertaken during the 2023/24 financial year by Council staff reported in the 2023/24 Annual Report. The four trips were all undertaken by General Manager, Ms Rebecca Ryan in her capacity as a Board Member of the International City/Country Management Association (ICMA).

In 2021, Ms Ryan nominated for, and was successfully appointed, as the Regional Vice President and member of the ICMA Executive Board.

ICMA is the leading organisation of local government professionals dedicated to creating and sustaining thriving communities throughout the world. They work with more than 13,000 members to identify and speed the adoption of leading local government practices to improve the lives of residents. ICMA offers membership, professional development programs, research, publications, data and information, technical assistance, and training to local government chief administrative officers, their staff, and other organisations around the globe.

Ms Ryan attended an ICMA annual conference and three ICMA Board meetings during 2023/24.

The learning opportunities, networking, and sharing of ideas provide direct benefits to the projects, activities and initiatives of QPRC. The conference provides exposure to new and emerging technologies for consideration by Council along with shared problem-solving opportunities.

2. What was the full costs to QPRC for each trip?

There were no costs to Council for the overseas trips as reported in the 2023/24 Annual Report.

All travel, accommodation and expenses associated with ICMA Board Meetings were paid for by ICMA. Travel, accommodation and expenses associated with the ICMA Annual Conference were paid for by Ms Ryan as a personal expense.

Ms Ryan took personal Annual Leave to attend the ICMA Executive Board Meetings and the ICMA Annual Conference.

- 3. Does council have a policy for out-of-State and international trips it pays for? For example:**
- (a) **Does the trip need to have a particular objective such as being beneficial to the productivity or efficiency of QPRC?**
 - (b) **Are there expenditure limits and grade-of-service limits, such as class of air travel, hotel accommodation, and per diems? If so, what are they?**
 - (c) **Who authorises the expenditure for out-of-State trips and international trips with a cost greater than AUD 5,000, and under what financial delegation.**
 - (d) **Are partners and family allowed to travel with the traveling council manager, and if so, what is council policy regarding costs associated with partners and family?**

Attendance at conferences is an essential way of upskilling Council staff to expand upon their knowledge for the benefit of the community and how they are best served. All trips, conferences or professional development activities are assessed, and attendance approved if there is a benefit to the organisation.

Staff comply with the Staff Travel and Expenditure Policy and Councillors are governed by the Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy for any professional development and related travel.

The thresholds for expenditure on accommodation, meals and incidentals are determined by the Australian Taxation Office guidelines for the relevant financial year.

<https://www.ato.gov.au/law/view/pdf/pbr/td2024-003.pdf>

The General Manager, Directors and Managers are authorised to consider and approve interstate trips for staff members within their individual financial delegation. The Mayor reviews and is delegated to approve/decline any professional development requests for the General Manager.

If partners are travelling with the delegate (staff or Councillor), this is at the cost of the individual and is not covered by Council.

For air travel that is reimbursed as Council business, neither staff or Councillors can accrue points from the airline's frequent flyer program as this is considered a private benefit.

- 4. Would a reasonable person deem any such trips paid for by council (be that out of pockets or wages) to be political or extra governmental in nature?**

Councillors cannot obtain private or political benefit from any expense or facility provided by Council.

Council's Staff Travel and Expenditure Policy and Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy detail the eligible out of pocket expenses that may be claimed for reimbursement, which requires the production of receipts.

- 5. Are trip reports and/or lessons learned report from each out-of-State and international trip provided to Councillors to review?**

Councillors who attend interstate meetings typically provide a Delegate's Report to a Council meeting to outline the purpose and value of their trip.

The 2023/24 Annual Report reports the attendance of Cr Willis at a Climate Summit in Melbourne. Cr Willis presented a Delegates Report to the 8 November 2023 Council meeting, titled 'Attendance at Cities Power Partnership Conference'. A full copy of the report is at Agenda Item 13.1 in the 8 November 2023 Council Meeting business papers available on our website at: <https://www.qprc.nsw.gov.au/Council-meetings>

Staff who attend conferences, events and professional development activities are encouraged to share their learnings with their teams and direct reports.