

Notice of Motion, Cr Mayne: Public disclosure of Council speeches

19 July 2016

Motion

That the Future Melbourne Committee requests management to:

1. Create a dedicated speeches page on Council's website by 15 September 2016 which is to include at least 10 speeches given by the Lord Mayor, councillors or seniors officers to external bodies since the commencement of the Lord Mayor's period in office in late 2008.
2. CASM is operationally responsible for determining which topical speeches are worthy of inclusion but no councillor speech is to be included without the approval of that councillor and the source and format of speeches selected is to include the following 5 categories:
 - The text of speeches written by council staff, provided they are adjusted for any changes when delivered;
 - Links to videos of speeches hosted on council's Youtube channel;
 - Audio files of speeches, similar to what occurs presently with audio of council and committee meetings;
 - Links to third party websites if the speech has been captured and hosted by external organisations (such as the Lord Mayor's 2015 Redmond Barry oration at The State Library);
 - Accurate transcripts of speeches given without notes.

Background

With an open by default policy on data and a commitment to being one of Australia's most transparent councils, this motion seeks to address a notable gap in City of Melbourne's website disclosure regime.

At the moment, we have no systematic online disclosure for in person speeches given by councillors or senior officers to third party organisations.

If you weren't in the room when the speech was given, you don't get the benefit of knowing what was said on behalf of City of Melbourne ratepayers. This significantly limits the reach of speeches as a communication platform.

Some speeches are captured by external organisations but there is no central disclosure repository for our important council speeches.

A similar gap existed with policy submissions to external organisations but this was remedied by a similarly worded motion in July 2015 and we now have 46 submissions on council's submissions page. This serves the purpose of sharing council's expertise with the wider world, demonstrating the breadth of council's policy input and recognising the work of officers who prepare the submissions.

By setting an initial low number of just 10 speeches over 8 years, CASM will have lots of material to choose from and will be able to take a minimalist approach initially as everyone adapts to the new system of better sharing council's spoken communications. It can then be scaled up in the next term of council.

For those who are reluctant to go down this path, remember that audio files of every speech given by councillors, officers and submitters at public council and committee meetings since 2013 are now fully archived indefinitely alongside the minutes.

Similarly, there is 50 pages of media releases on council's website going back to 2013 and all 4700 council tweets since January 2011 are still accessible by the public.

There are also 302 videos available on council's Youtube page, many of which include appearances from councillors or council staff.

And if a councillor or officer doesn't want a speech they've given made available, they can just request that CASM not include it on the speeches page. Worried councillors have an effective veto over their own speeches in this motion, so why not support this motion and let council as a whole use the internet to better share a limited number of our more important and informative speeches with a wider audience?

Moved: Cr Mayne