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**in** Property Council of Australia

28 February 2025

Mr Brett Whitworth  
Deputy Secretary, Local Government  
Office of Local Government  
Locked Bag 3015  
NOWRA NSW 2541

Via email: [olg@olg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:olg@olg.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Mr Whitworth,

We welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed changes to the Model Code of Meeting Practice for Local Councils in NSW (Model Meeting Code).

Our members include the nation's major investors, owners, managers, developers, designers and builders of property of all asset classes. We recognise the role of local government in making decisions that affect the property industry, which shapes the future of our cities. We have a deep long-term interest in seeing our cities prosper as productive, sustainable, and safe places.

The draft Model Meeting Code removes provisions relating to pre-meeting briefing sessions, which in effect, should still allow councils to set their own rules regarding pre-meeting briefings. We do not support the express prohibition of closed briefing sessions for councillors, as this will likely result in councillors making less well-informed decisions and increase the deferral of reports for further information.

We recommend that pre-meeting briefings should continue to be permitted, as this practice remains the case for local planning panels. These briefings improve the effectiveness of council meetings and councillors' understanding of officer reports. Where pre-meeting briefings are supported, there should be a requirement to invite an applicant (and any subject matter experts as required) for their part of the briefing, as these forums can be useful in supplying councillors with background and context on development proposals in a neutral environment.

We thank the Office of Local Government for the opportunity to provide a submission to the draft Model Meeting Code. If you have any questions about this submission, please contact NSW Policy Manager, Emma Thompson at [ethompson@propertycouncil.com.au](mailto:ethompson@propertycouncil.com.au) or by phone on 0458 294 817.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K Stevenson".

**Katie Stevenson**  
NSW Executive Director  
Property Council of Australia