

Submissions – Policy & Guide

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Policy for handling submissions

Introduction

Submissions are an important part of Environment Canterbury's decision-making process. A submission is formal feedback from an individual or an organisation/group in response to a Council proposal. It is one of the main ways Council can better understand the views on an issue and factor them into their decision making.

This policy relates to handling submissions under the Local Government Act 2002 (including Annual and Long-Term Plans). The principles in this policy may also be used for other areas of legislation. It does not cover submissions under the Resource Management Act 1991, where a separate process is applied.

Who can make a submission?

Anyone can make a submission regardless of their age or place of residence. You don't need to be a ratepayer to make a submission. Submissions can be made by individuals or representatives of an organisation, group or agency.

Submissions are public documents

Submissions are public documents. While personal contact details may be removed, the submitter's name will be published unless they specify otherwise. Only Council and relevant staff members will have access to unredacted versions of submissions.

Submission minimum criteria

To be considered, all submissions must include:

- First and last name
- Organisation, if appropriate.
- One of the following:
 - Postal address
 - Email address
- Telephone number – while not mandatory this may be helpful if you wish to arrange attendance at a Council Hearing.

Accepted submission methods

Environment Canterbury will receive submissions:

1. Online – through a survey on Environment Canterbury’s engagement portal at haveyoursay.ecan.govt.nz
2. By post – to: **Freepost 1201, Environment Canterbury, PO Box 345, Christchurch 8140**
3. By email – to a specified consultation email address
4. In person – Drop a form off at one of our offices.

Accepted submission formats and languages

Environment Canterbury will accept submissions that are:

- Written or spoken in English or Te Reo Māori
- New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL)
- Recorded as video or audio files.

Environment Canterbury can provide assistance for people who need help to make a submission. Note: guidance on the content of the submission cannot be provided.

Submission content conditions

Environment Canterbury reserves the right to remove from consideration, any submission – in part or in full – that contains content that is clearly determined to be of the following nature:

1. Frivolous or vexatious
2. Offensive language
3. Discriminatory or derogatory
4. Personal threats or harassment of Councillors or staff members
5. Would be an abuse of the hearing process to allow the submission (or part thereof) to be taken further
6. Unrelated to Environment Canterbury work (in which case Environment Canterbury would endeavour to forward the submission to the appropriate agency if they can be identified).

Submitters will not be unfairly denied the opportunity to make genuine submissions. Where there is uncertainty, the default position will be to allow the submission with every effort made to preserve as much of the content as possible.

Environment Canterbury’s Chair, Deputy Chair and/or Chief Executive will be responsible for the final decision on whether any submission or part thereof should be removed from consideration.

Any substantial redactions or removals of submissions will be listed and provided to Council prior to deliberations.

Late submissions

A late submission is any submission received after the indicated consultation closing date and time. For postal submissions, this is any submission post-marked after the consultation’s closing date.

Late submissions may be accepted subject to a Council resolution before the hearing or deliberations begin. Acceptance of late submissions will be at Council's discretion. In considering whether to accept late submissions, Council will consider whether:

- the submission is received at a practical point in the process (eg before hearings begin)
- the submitter will have an unfair advantage over others.

Guide to making a submission

(not part of the policy, but a supporting guide)

Making a submission is one way you can get involved in Environment Canterbury's Council decision-making processes. We provide many ways to make a submission so you can get involved and influence decisions that may affect you, your community or the environment.

Ways to make a submission:

Submissions are formal feedback that you can provide on a specific topic. We accept submissions:

Online

Visit haveyoursay.ecan.govt.nz where you can read about issues, proposals and consultation topics, then fill out an online form with your feedback. This is our preferred way to receive submissions.

By email

Email us at the specified consultation email address. Please make sure you include the name of the consultation in the email's subject.

By post

Please mail all paper submissions to Freepost 1201, Environment Canterbury, PO Box 345, Christchurch 8140. You may either:

- **Use our form**
You can download, print, and fill in a manual submission form, from haveyoursay.ecan.govt.nz. These are also available to collect from your local library in Canterbury or by **contacting our office on 0800 324 636**.
- **Use your own form**
You may also draft your own submission form/document and mail to the address above.

In person

You may drop a copy of your submission at one of our offices.

Format of submissions

You may make a submission in English, Te Reo Māori, or New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL). It can be written or provided as an audio or video file.

You may also present at public hearings in English, Te Reo Māori or NZSL. We can provide you with assistance if you need help to make your submission. Note: we cannot provide guidance on the content of your submission.

What do we do with your submissions?

All submissions are public documents and after the consultation period closes, submissions and/or a summary of submissions are published on our website. Personal contact details will be redacted, but the name of the submitter will be included unless you let us know that do not wish your name to be made public. Council and relevant staff reviewing the submissions will receive unredacted versions of submissions.

If you have indicated you wish to speak to your submission, Environment Canterbury staff will contact you about attending a hearing. Hearings are public Council meetings and dates are published on our website, in the consultation document and in public notices.

Tips for writing an effective submission

Be prepared! A clear, well-written submission is more effective than one prepared in haste.

- Stick to the topic and the purpose. Please keep your submission relevant to the matter being consulted on.
- Be concise and clear. Tell Council what you want to see happen.
- You may submit supporting documents along with your submission form if you wish.
- You may form a combined submission, if you wish to speak on behalf of a group.
- If you wish to speak to your submission at a public hearing, please indicate this in your submission and ensure you provide an email address and contact phone number.
 - Public hearings are held at Environment Canterbury offices, where anyone who has made a submission, may request an opportunity to speak to Councillors about their submission. It is a chance for you to speak in support of your submission, and for Council to ask questions to learn more about your submission and case.
 - Note that hearings are always recorded, published and form part of the public record.