



SUBMISSIONS POLICY

From: Policy and Strategy Manager
File No: OSM 03 00
Date: July 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide the handling of submissions. Submissions are an important part of Horizons Regional Council (Horizons) decision-making process. A submission is formal feedback from an individual or an organization/group in response to a Council consultation. It is one of the main ways Council can better understand the views on an issue and factor them into their decision making.

2. Scope

This policy relates to handling submissions under the Local Government Act 2002 (including Annual and Long-Term Plans, and Transport Plans). The principles in this policy may also be used for other areas of legislation. It does not cover formal submissions under the Resource Management Act 1991, where a separate, specified process outlined in the Act, is required¹.

3. 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.

4. 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, for the purpose for which the submissions were collected.

¹ For example, submissions under Schedule 1 of the RMA, and on resource consents are not covered by this policy.

5. 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
 - If the submitter wishes to be heard, if applicable to the consultation

6. Acceptable submission methods

Horizons will receive submissions:

- Online – through a survey on the relevant Horizons engagement portal e.g., <https://haveyoursay.horizons.govt.nz/>
- By post – to: Private Bag 11025, Manawātū Mail Centre, Palmerston North 4442.
- By email – to a specified consultation email address.
- In person – Drop a form off at one of our offices or service centres.

Some submission processes may include a need to compile submissions from different sources into one central database. This may create a need for staff to re-enter submissions from one medium to another (e.g. from hard copies to a digital database). In such instances, every attempt will be made to ensure data accuracy, acknowledging a small risk for human error.

7. Accepted submission formats and languages

Horizons 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.

Horizons can provide assistance for people who need help to make a submission.

Note: guidance on the content of the submission cannot be provided by Horizons staff or Council members.

8. Submission content conditions

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

- (i) Frivolous or vexatious.
- (ii) Offensive language, including profanity.
- (iii) Discriminatory or derogatory.
- (iv) Personal threats or harassment of Councillors or staff members.
- (v) Would be an abuse of the hearing process to allow the submission (or part thereof) to be taken further.
- (vi) Unrelated to Horizons work (in which case Horizons would endeavour to forward the submission to the appropriate agency if they can be identified).
- (vii) Illegible. All submissions must be legible, and staff will not be held responsible for misinterpreting a semi-legible submission.

Pro-forma submissions, (e.g. multiple submissions with identical content), will be presented to decision makers as a single submission with all submitters' names and a tally at the top. These submissions may not all be made publicly available on our website, rather a single version of

the submission with a tally and submitter names will be displayed. However, all submissions will still be counted individually.

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.

Horizons Regional Council Chair, Committee Chair, Group Manager and/or Chief Executive will be responsible for the final decision on whether any submission or part thereof should be removed from consideration.

For consultation under s83 of the LGA, any substantial redactions or removals of submissions will be listed and provided to Council or the Hearing Committee prior to deliberations.

9. 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.

In the case of consultations with hearings or deliberations, late submissions may be accepted subject to a Council or Committee resolution before the hearing or deliberations begin. In the case of submissions to a Transport Plan, a decision may be made on the day of the hearing. 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 (e.g. before hearings begin and with sufficient time for the matters raised in the submission to be summarised and considered by officers).
- the submitter will have an unfair advantage over others.

10. Submitters who wish to be heard

In the case of consultations with hearings, submitters who have stated they wish to be heard will be notified of the start date, time, and location of the hearing before the hearing starts. Submitters may be allocated a speaking time. Prior to, or at the beginning of the hearing, the chairperson will outline how the hearing will be run. This may include who may speak, at what time, and for how long, that evidence is not given on oath, that there is no cross-examination, the availability of equipment, and the potential timeframe for a decision.

11. Submissions Form Template

Submissions Form Template

Submissions close [time, date]

Mandatory Information:

Name of submitter:

Which organisation are you submitting on behalf of, or are you submitting as an individual?

Postal address or email address:

Phone number (optional):

Appearance at a hearing (select all that apply): (if applicable)

- ☐ I wish to be heard in support of my submission; or,
- ☐ I do not wish to be heard in support of my submission
- ☐ If others make a similar submission, I will consider presenting a joint case with them at a hearing

Signature:

Date:

Mailing Details:

Mailed to: Attn: [team/name] Horizons Regional Council, Private Bag 11025, Manawātū Mail Centre, Palmerston North, 4442.

Delivered to: [Delivery address]

Emailed to: [Email address]

How we will use your information:

The information collected from you in your submission is held securely by Horizons Regional Council. We will use this information to contact you and keep you informed of the process; to serve your submission on the applicant; and to inform and advise the applicant, other submitters, the decision-maker and the public. Your submission, or a summary of it, will be made publicly available on the Horizons Regional Council website. Any non-published information can also be requested by the public under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Please note that submissions are subject to the Horizons submissions policy which can be found here: [website address or appendix]

Consultation questions:

12. Review of these Guidelines

These guidelines may be reviewed from time to time by Horizons at its sole discretion, and in any event will be reviewed biennially. To be clear however, these guidelines remain valid and in force, irrespective of whether the review date has passed. Horizons will notify employees of any changes made; and may, at its sole discretion, consult employees prior to making any such changes.

The next review will be in November 2026.

Signed:


Michael McCartney
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Date: 30/07/2025