

Petitions Guidelines

Date approved: March 2021

Next review: March 2024

Introduction

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist people in writing a petition that is to be presented to Council. These guidelines also explain the process of having a petition presented to Council and what happens following once we receive it.

A petition is a paper or electronic document asking Council to take a specific action to address a concern or change policy. A petition is signed by a number of people to indicate support for a proposal.

Anyone may petition the Council, and you do not have to be over a certain age or live within the Waikato District, noting however that Council and Council committees are accountable to the Waikato District ratepayers.

Petitioning the Council is not always the only course of action. We always encourage you to discuss the matter with a staff member, Councillors or Mayor first. Some matters can also be investigated by an Ombudsman or other agencies.

Note that whilst Council may accept a petition from the public, this decision does not mean Council is required to take action to address the issues raised in the petition.

Guidelines for preparing a petition

The following are guidelines that can be used when preparing a petition for Council:

- Petitions should include a short statement (no more than 150 words), regarding the issue to be addressed.
- Petitions should state the name, physical address, and signature of the person or organisation who started the petition.
- The petition must not be disrespectful or use offensive language or statements made with malice.
- Petitions can be written and presented in English or Te Reo Maaori. A petition may also be presented to Council in Sign Language. However, petitioners planning to make and/or present a petition in Te Reo Maaori or sign language should advise the relevant chairperson of this at least **two working days** before the meeting. This is to enable the petition to be translated and reprinted (if necessary).
- Petition documents should contain a privacy waiver, advising signatories that the information gathered by the petition may be made publicly available/published.
- The Petitioner should ensure the petition is addressed directly to Waikato District Council.

For paper petitions:

- Petitions should include a name, physical address and signature of each person who is in support of the proposal.
- Each subsequent page of the petition containing signatures should also contain the petition statement.
- Unless incapacitated, a person must sign the petition personally. A person signing on behalf of an incapacitated person must state this fact beside the signature.
- Signatures should be original (not photocopied, faxed, scanned, pasted or otherwise transferred onto sheets of the petition).

For electronic petitions:

- Petitions should include the name and physical address of each person who is in support of the proposal.
- Petitions should include a closing date for the collection of signatures for your petition.

Process for receiving and presenting a petition

1. Principal petitioner sends the petition to Council
2. Corporate Planning team checks that the petition is in line with the Petition Guidelines and Standing Orders.
3. If the petition contains more information than full name, address and signature, the additional information is redacted from the copy of the petition document attached to any agenda.
4. The petition is presented by staff to the next relevant Committee of Council. The principal petitioner will be advised of which Committee of Council the petition will be presented to.
5. If the principal petitioner wishes to speak to their petition, they will need to seek permission from the relevant Council Committee chair
6. Either Council or the relevant Committee of Council makes decisions on next steps for the petition, for example if further work is needed by staff to investigate the issues raised by the petition.
7. Council notifies principal petitioner of Council's decision

Example paper petition

Chief Executive
Waikato District Council
Private Bag 544
Ngaruawahia 3742

Note:

To the Chief Executive,

We, the residents of [town/locality] wish to petition the Waikato District Council on the following:
[state grounds or concerns on the issue] **(Note: the petition should comprise fewer than 150 words (not including signatories.)**

The contact person for this petition is:

Name:

Postal Address:

Town/Postcode:

Contact Number:

Email address:

Note: For privacy reasons, these details could be included in a separate covering letter.

To the Waikato District Council Signatories – please print clearly

	Name	Physical Address	Signature
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

7.			
8.			
9.			

Privacy Notice: Petitions received by the Council are public documents and along with the name of the petitioner will be released to persons who may request a copy. The contact details of the signatories will be withheld unless the Principal Petitioner indicates that they do not object to those contact details being released.

Subsequent pages of petition

To the Waikato District Council,

We, the residents of [town/locality] wish to petition the Waikato District Council on the following:
 [state grounds or concerns on the issue] **(Note: the petition should comprise fewer than 150 words (not including signatories.)**

Signatories – please print clearly

	Name	Physical Address	Signature
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			

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