

Submitting a petition

What is a petition?

A petition is a document addressed to the Chief Executive, signed by one person or many people, which requests Council takes action on a matter of Council policy, or to put right a local or private grievance.

Who can petition?

Anyone of any age may petition Council, including individuals, businesses, clubs and community organisations that have sufficient identity as organisations.

Should you petition?

Petitioning Council is not always the only course of action. Some matters can be investigated by an Ombudsman or other agencies.

To find out whether a matter is within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman, go to <http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/get-help-public>.

Principal petitioner

The principal petitioner is usually the person:

- who has initiated or organised the petition; and
- is sought by a committee to provide further information on the petition.

Format of a petition

Petition format and content must:

- be in English or Te Reo Māori
- contain fewer than 50 words (not including signatories)
- include your request of Council – you may also include any reasons
- not be disrespectful, or use offensive language or include statements made with malice
- every page with signatures must have the full text of your request on it and any reasons if included – this shows that people know what they are signing
- signatures must include the persons full name alongside their signature
- signatures must be originals – you cannot transfer signatures from another document onto your petition.

If the petition is in Te Reo Māori, prior arrangement with the chairperson should be sought at least two working days before the meeting. This can be done via the Committee Secretary.

Council can request that any petition be translated and/or printed in another language.

Signing the front page

It is important that Council is aware of the name of the person presenting the petition. Make sure the name of the principal petitioner, who may be an individual or a person who is representing an organisation, appears at the head of the petition.

If the petition is from a business or club/society, an authorised officer of the organisation must sign the front page of the petition on behalf of the organisation.

Rules for signatures on pages

Unless incapacitated, a person must sign a petition themselves (a person signing on behalf of an incapacitated person must state this fact beside the signature).

Signatures must be original (not photocopied, faxed, scanned, pasted or otherwise transferred onto sheets of the petition).

Petitions acceptable for presentation

A petition must be clearly addressed to the Chief Executive, Ashburton District Council to be accepted. It must also abide by the guidance given under the section titled 'Format of a petition'.

If the petition is similar to an earlier petition that has already been considered by Council, it may be received or considered by a committee or Council only if substantial and material new evidence has become available since the consideration of the earlier petition.

Presenting a petition

Prior to the committee meeting, the Strategy & Policy team will discuss the process of presenting the petition and check the number of people expected to attend the meeting to support the petition.

Consideration of petitions by Council

Once a petition has been received by the Chief Executive, the petition becomes an agenda item for the next scheduled meeting of Council.

If the petitioner wishes to be heard, this must be clearly stated when submitting the petition. Speakers on petitions are allowed a maximum of five minutes. If the petition is presented by a councillor on behalf of the petitioners, the councillor may only read the petition, the statement of the parties from which it comes and the number of signatories attached to it.

The petition and what decision, if any, Council has resolved is contained in the meeting minutes and is publicly available. The petitioner will be notified of the decision and what action will be taken.

Checklist

Checklist	What you need to consider including
Who is it from?	Name and contact details of principal petitioner
Word count	Every petition presented must comprise fewer than 50 words (not including signatures)
State whether you wish to appear before Council	Yes / No
Correct format?	Include the request and reasoning on every page which contains signatures.
Appropriate details of signees collected?	A petition must include for each person who has signed, their full name written clearly.

Appendix 1 summarises the petition process in diagram form; Appendix 2 provides an example petition layout.

If you would like further information on procedures, contact the Strategy & Policy team at submissions@adc.govt.nz or 03 307 7700.

Appendix 1 - The petition process



