



# How to make council plans work for you

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## Why get involved?

Every council has plans that dictate what you can and can't do on your farm. When these plans are being developed or changed, each council must seek community feedback on the actions they are proposing.

If you want to change the way these plans impact on your farm, then it is critically important to get involved – this means you!

B+LNZ actively seeks good outcomes for sheep and beef farmers, but we can only do so much. Council plans won't work for the sheep and beef sector if you don't tell them what you need.

**This brochure was created to help guide you through the Council submission process, so together we can have maximum engagement into, and impact on council planning.**

**We all want better environmental outcomes - rules that are workable for the primary sector will help us to achieve this.**

# What's the process?

By law, each council must follow a specific process to engage the public. This is:

**1**  
Proposed Plan/ Plan change notified – Council will advertise on their website, in the newspaper etc.

**2**  
**Public submission period – This is when you get to share your thoughts with Council**

**3**  
Council creates a summary of submissions – Council will tell you what everyone said

## Writing a persuasive submission

A few simple things you can do to ensure you write a powerful submission:

- **Don't write too much;** stick to the facts. Clear bullet points are often enough and you can expand on what you want to say at the hearing. Be specific and provide examples. Tell the council what you want – don't leave them to guess.
- **Write about the plan;** not about council rates or any other issues you have with council. Focus on the environmental effects of the proposal.
- **Set the scene by telling your story;** start by briefly telling Council about you, your family, and your farm – Do you have history or connection to the area, what type of farming systems do you have, why is the area important to you?
- **Tell Council what parts of the Plan you like and dislike;** identify which parts of the Plan you like (support), or don't like (oppose). You can do this for as many or as few parts of the Plan as you want.
- **Tell Council how the Plan will affect you;** for each part of the Plan you've identified - talk about how the proposal will affect you/ your family/ your farm, and explain how you would like the proposal changed (relief sought).

Here is a simple template you may like to follow, as you write your submission:

The specific provisions my submission relates to are:	My submission is that	Why/ reason	Relief Sought
Rule number and name _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ (e.g. Rule 70 - Stock exclusion)	I support/oppose _____ _____ _____ _____	I like that: _____ _____ I don't like that: _____ _____ The reasons why I think this are: _____ _____	The decision I would like Council to make is: _____ _____ _____ Clearly explain your recommended alternative - this might be deleting the rule altogether or suggesting specific wording changes

Council publishes a report (s42A) – Council reviews all the information they have received so far, discusses the ideas they like and the ideas they don't like, and suggest how these can be incorporated into the plan.

7 Decision reached.

4

Further submissions – you get to review what everyone else said and if you disagree with other submissions, you can tell Council.

5

6

**Public hearing – this is when you get to stand up and share your thoughts with the decision makers.**

## Here is an example of a real submission

### ✓ Examples of a powerful submission

**The specific provisions my submission relates to are:** Rule 70

**My submission is that:** I oppose the blanket fencing policy

**The reasons why I think this are:** My farm is at the top of a watershed where creeks are in gullies which are small and there are many of them with much natural vegetation already in existence. I already keep cattle out of these areas and disagree with a blanket fencing rule for my property.

**The decision I would like Council to make is:**

I propose a fencing policy which allows for discretion, applicable to individual properties.

### ✗ Example of a weaker submission

Compromises can and should be sought where the letter of the plan is impractical... if we are to improve our waterways it has to be in the true sense of consultation. Not dictation.

Your submission **must** also include the following information. Without it, your submission is invalid and won't be accepted by Council. We suggest you attach this information as a cover page to your submission:

To: *[name of local authority]*

Name of submitter: *[full name]*

This is a submission on: *[name of proposed plan/ plan change/variation].*

I could not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.

I wish/ do not wish to be heard in support of my submission.

Signature of submitter: *[A signature is not required if you make your submission by electronic means.]*

Date: Telephone:

Address: Email:



8

Public and submitters notified of decision.

9

Appeals by submitters – if you don't like the decision, you have 30 working days to appeal the decision.

10

Plan/ Plan change becomes operative.

## Important notes

- If you want to get involved, you need to 'get on the bus' at stage 1 – you can only speak at the hearing, for example, if you've entered a written submission and have asked to be heard at the hearing.
- You can't provide evidence on parts of the plan you did not submit on – try to cover all the parts of the plan that concern you in your submission.
- The two critical steps for you to be involved in are writing a submission, and speaking at the hearing.

# At the hearing

**This part of the process is so important – we can't stress this enough!**

**Tell Council you want to speak;** if you want to speak at the hearing you must have stated that you wish to be heard on your written submission.

**Explain your submission;** you can explain your submission in more detail or introduce evidence to support what you have said in writing at the hearing. This is where you can have maximum effect!

**The most persuasive presentations;** when farmers show photographs of their property and talk about how the Plan will affect them and their farm, the hearing commissioners listen.

**Come prepared;** you can prepare a written statement before the hearing and read this out at the hearing.

## Hearing Committee

The hearing committee will be made up of councillors and/or independent commissioners; one will act as a chairperson. They are neutral and their role is to listen to arguments for and against the plan.

The hearing committee will treat you with dignity and respect, and try to put you at ease. You should treat them with respect also.

## Give a winning presentation

- **Show photographs of your farm;** talk about how the Plan will affect you and your farming operations. Focus on the environmental matters, not simply what you like and dislike.
- **Keep to what you are an expert at – farming;** although in many cases you will have expertise in other areas, try to stick to your farming expertise – this gives your submission maximum credibility.
- **Keep your statement simple;** stick to the facts, make your key points clear, and speak clearly
- **Expand on your submission:** introduce further facts and details to support your points but don't try to cover anything that you haven't raised in your original submission. Focus on the issue at hand - don't use the hearing as a chance to discuss or argue other issues.
- **The hearing is neutral;** leave your personal opinions about the council at the door.

# How can B+LNZ help you?

**We are here to help guide you through this process. We:**

- write guidance documents;
- create submission templates;
- hold workshops to help you write your submission;
- hold workshops to help you prepare for the hearing;
- give evidence at hearings;
- provide advice on your submissions as you develop them;
- prepare supporting information to help you at the hearings; and
- work with council to inform their understanding of the sector.

Call us anytime you have questions, want feedback on your submission, or even to practice your hearing statement.

**We are here to help you - please get in touch at any time**

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