

NZCCSS Guide to Government Writing a Submission



What is a submission?

Submissions are an opportunity for an individual or organisation to provide feedback and additional information about matters before a parliamentary committee. These could include a Bill, Inquiry, petition, consultation or other matter that a parliamentary committee is considering, which we refer to as 'Items of Business'.

Submissions allow you to tell the government what you agree or disagree with, and what you believe they should do to improve items of business. They are an important part of our democratic process. Even if you voted for the government of the day, you may not agree with everything they are doing. Submissions allow you to express your concerns and suggestions or to support items of business you agree with.

Not all items of business will be open for public feedback through the submissions process. Sometimes the Select Committee stage of the legislative process is skipped entirely (under urgency) or legislative changes are made without an invitation for feedback.

How do I find information about items of business that are open for submission?

Unfortunately at this stage there is no quick way to find all open submissions on Bills that are being considered or consultations.

Submissions on Bills:

[Parliament website](#) includes a list of all Bills, including the stage the Bill is currently at:

- Once a Bill has had its first reading (stage 1) it is generally sent to select committee for review which usually indicates that it will be opening for public submissions in the near future.
- Once a Bill reaches the Select Committee (SC stage) if the Bill is being open to submissions these will be linked through the Bills page or can be directly accessed through the [Make a Submission](#) section of the website
- Submissions pages should provide you a summary of the Bill/legislation and link to any supporting documents at the bottom of the page. They will also include the timeline for submissions. Timelines vary considerably and can be as short as a few days to as long as few months. It is important to get your submission in on time as they will not be accepted once the deadline has passed.

Consultations from Ministries and Government Departments:

Ministries and Government Departments list their open consultations on their own ministry websites (for example the [Ministry of Health](#), [Ministry of Justice](#) or [Ministry of Education](#)). This can make it trickier to find open consultations as it's a lot of websites to check.

How do I write a submission?



Introduce your submission

If you are submitting as part of an organisation you can provide a quick introduction to the organisation and how the submission fits (or doesn't fit) with the organisations values. If you are submitting as an individual you can provide some insight into your own expertise if relevant. Summarise what you think about the topic and why.

Recommendations

If you think changes are needed, highlight what you think should happen or what should change and why. If you think nothing needs changing you can skip making recommendations and just express your support for the legislation.

Be clear but concise

Use headings, paragraphs and bullet points, stay on topic and try to limit the length of your submission overall

Be evidence-based

Reference evidence, whether that's research studies, examples from other countries or regions and how they support the points you've made

Stay Relevant

Make sure your suggestions and recommendations are relevant to the item of business. Sometimes, when the government is providing an opportunity for feedback they provide a list of questions they want answered. This list is only a guide and although you can answer these in your submission, it is ok to provide feedback outside the scope of these questions as long as it's still relevant to the item of business. With online submissions there is often a place to add additional feedback at the end of the questions section.

Use plain language

Even if you understand the topic and jargon really well, the person reading your submission may not be as familiar with the area as you are. It's best to keep to plain language and explain any terminology you're using to ensure the committee reviewing your submission has a good understanding of your points

Things to remember about submissions

- All submissions to a select committee are publicly available at the end of the committee stage. This means whatever you write is able to be viewed online by anyone who looks.
- Submissions to a consultation will be summarised and will not be individually available to the public. We still recommend being careful with your personal details in consultations.
- You can submit as an individual or organisation. Your name, or your organisations name, will be included with your submission. If you are submitting on behalf of an organisation, make sure you are allowed to.
- Not all submissions have to be accepted. If a submission is deemed to be irrelevant, offensive or defamatory or is suppressed by an order of a New Zealand court, they can return or disregard the submission.

Previous NZCCSS submissions can be found on our [website](#) to provide examples of a suitable layout.

What is an oral submission?

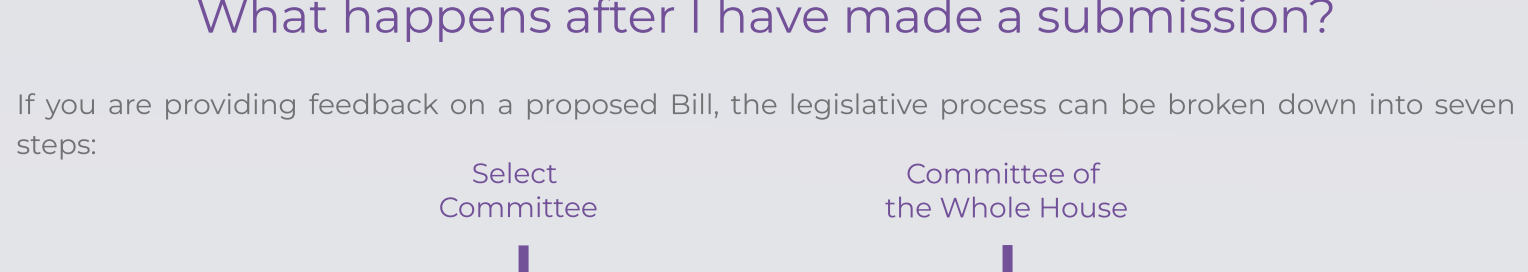


When making your submission on a Bill, you will have the opportunity to choose if you want to be invited to do an oral submission. This is where you speak to the Select Committee about your submission in person or online.

- You can submit a video you have recorded in advance.
- You can do an oral submission as an individual or as a group.
- You usually get either a 5 or 10 minute slot for an oral submission.
- the committee will have read the report already so don't just read it. Highlight of the main point of your submission and give more information on it.
- You want to spark the select committee to ask you questions and start a conversation about your points, so make sure you leave time and are prepared to answer questions and discuss your point of view.
- Oral submissions are available to watch online both live through parliaments website and on their Facebook page. They remain available to view online after the submissions are completed.

What happens after I have made a submission?

If you are providing feedback on a proposed Bill, the legislative process can be broken down into seven steps:



The Select Committee step is where the public are asked to provide feedback and put in submissions on the proposed Bill. The Select Committee process usually takes 6 months, during which time the committee gathers information and prepares a report to submit to the House.

The report they present usually has advice and amendments for the on the bill for the House to consider at the Second Reading which is the second opportunity for debate of the Bill. If you submitted feedback on a proposed Bill, you can check the Bill on [Parliament Website](#) to see when the report is due to be released; these details are usually available after submissions on the bill have closed.

For consultations for Ministries and Government Departments, information regarding the findings or outcomes of these consultations are generally posted to the website of the relevant Ministry or Department. There is no fixed time for these reports to be generated.

Unfortunately, at this point in time there is no way to receive feedback directly regarding the outcome of the Bill or consultation. You will have to check back to get this information yourself.

**Submissions are critical to having your voice heard in the parliamentary process.
If you have an opinion, make sure the government hears it!**

