



**WHANGANUI  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

# PETITION GUIDELINES 2017

*Effective date: 19 July 2017*

*Next review date: 10 May 2021*

[www.whanganui.govt.nz](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz)



## Petition Guidelines

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### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to assist people in the writing of a petition that is to be presented to the Council. The intent of the petition needs to be clear and in a form that is easily read and understood.

In this guide the term Council also refers to a Committee of Council and the Wanganui Rural Community Board.

### 2. What is a petition?

A petition is a document addressed to the Council. Petitions must contain at least **20** signatures and consist of fewer than **150** words (not including signatories). It asks the Council to act on a matter of public policy or law, or to put right a local or private concern.

Anyone of any age can petition the Council including corporations and unincorporated bodies with sufficient identity as organisations. If the petition is from a corporation or unincorporated body, a duly authorised officer of the body must sign the front page of the petition on behalf of the body.

### 3. Should you petition?

Petitioning the Council should be your last course of action. You may petition the Council when no other remedies are available, or where other statutory remedies have been exhausted.

- Is the Council the appropriate forum?
- Have you checked all avenues for redress?
- Is this a matter for the Office of the Ombudsman?
- Have you exhausted your legal remedies?
- Is this a matter that should be dealt with by a Court or Tribunal?

### 4. Petition in English or Te Reo Māori or Sign Language

A petition presented to Council may be in English, Te Reo Māori or Sign Language. Petitioners planning to make a petition in Te Reo Māori or Sign Language should advise the relevant Chairperson at least **two (2)** clear working days before the meeting if the petition is not to be presented in English. The Council may order that any petition in Te Reo Māori be translated and/or printed in English.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Whanganui District Council Standing Orders 14.2  
Petitions Guidelines 2017

## 5. Form of Petition

Every petition presented to the Council must consist of fewer than 150 words (not including signatories). Petitions must not be disrespectful, use offensive language or include malicious statements<sup>2</sup> and must ask the Council to take a defined action.

## 6. Preparing signature sheets

Each signature sheet shall be addressed to the Council by writing or typing the words “To the Council” on the top of each signature sheet. Under that line, write the request of the petition, as it appears on the cover sheet. The petition request must also appear on every signature sheet.

You may specify a name and address where the signed sheets are to be posted.

### *Rules for signatures on pages*

When collecting signatures on pages:

- signatories do not have to include their addresses;
- unless incapacitated, a person must sign a petition personally (a person signing on behalf of a person incapacitated must state this fact beside the signature);
- Signatures must be original (not photocopied, faxed, scanned, pasted or otherwise transferred onto sheets of the petition).

## 7. Petition Receipt and Presentation to Council

The Chief Executive will refuse any petition that is not in the proper form, which is repetitious or offensive, or is similar to an earlier petition that has already been considered by the Council. If the petition is not in the proper form it will be returned to the submitting Petitioner.

A petition must be received by the Chief Executive at least **five (5)** clear working days before the next notified Council meeting for it to be referred to that Council meeting.

Where a petition is received later than the required **five (5)** clear working days but prior to the notified Council meeting, the Chairperson of that meeting may introduce the petition as a late item, if and only if the petition is considered urgent.

Where a petition is received later than the required **five (5)** clear working days before the next notified Council meeting the petition will be referred to the following scheduled Council.

## 8. Petition where presented by petitioner

Where a petition is presented by more than one person then only **one (1)** petitioner is permitted to address the Council. The addressing petitioner will be permitted a maximum of **five (5)** minutes speaking time (excluding questions) unless the Council resolves otherwise.<sup>3&4</sup>

Where the Chairperson has reason to believe that the petitioner is disrespectful or offensive, or has made statements with malice, the Chairperson shall terminate presentation of the petition. So that there is no doubt no other petitioner is permitted to speak on the subject matter of the petition.

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<sup>2</sup> Whanganui District Council Standing Orders 17.9

<sup>3</sup> Whanganui District Council Standing Orders 14.3

<sup>4</sup> Whanganui District Council Standing Orders 17.9

## 9. Petition presented by Elected Member

Where the petition is presented by an elected member on behalf of the petitioners, the elected member will be permitted a maximum of **five (5)** minutes speaking time unless the Council, by way of resolution, determines otherwise. An elected member who presents a petition on behalf of petitioners is confined to reading the petition, the petitioners' statement, and the number of signatures attached to it. The elected member may not speak on the petition at any subsequent period of the meeting where the matter of the petition is under discussion.

## 10. Council Options

Following the presentation of the petition the Council may, by resolution, formally accept the petition and if necessary, by resolution, request staff to prepare a report for the next scheduled meeting addressing the action requested by the petition.

## 11. Privacy Act 1993

The Council petition template contains a privacy note stating that the petition when presented at the Council meeting becomes public information. For matters concerning privacy or the use of personal information contained in a petition please contact Council's Legal Services.

## 12. Council Details

If you have any questions in regard to the presenting of a petition please contact the Governance Services Team at the Council, 101 Guyton Street, Whanganui.

Customer Services Centre  
Whanganui District Council  
Telephone 06 3490001  
Email [wdc@whanganui.govt.nz](mailto:wdc@whanganui.govt.nz)  
Website [www.whanganui.govt.nz](http://www.whanganui.govt.nz)

Attachment 1. Sample Petition Style  
Attachment 2. Public speaking protocols

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### **Note 1**

Legislative Reference:  
Whanganui District Council Standing Orders adopted March 2017

### **Note 2**

Policy Communicated to the Public via the Council website July 2017.

# PETITION

(Date)



Chief Executive  
Whanganui District Council  
P O Box 637  
Whanganui

To the Chief Executive

We, the residents of [town/locality] wish to petition the Whanganui District Council on the following: [state grounds or concerns on the issue] (**Note: the petition must comprise fewer than 150 words (not including signatories<sup>5</sup> and contain at least 20 signatures.)**)


- (If you are representing an organisation, give brief details of the purpose of your organisation, membership and structure and the people consulted in the preparation of the petition).

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 Whanganui District Council

**State:** Purpose of Petition and defined action sought from Council

**Signatories – please print clearly**

	Name	Address (Signatories do not have to include their addresses)	Signature
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

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 such as telephone numbers, email address will be withheld unless the Principal Petitioner indicates that they do not object to those contact details being released.

<sup>5</sup> Whanganui District Council Standing Orders 14.2  
Petitions Guidelines 2017



**Subsequent pages of petition**

**To the Whanganui District Council**

We, the residents of [town/locality] wish to petition the Whanganui District Council on the following: [state grounds or concerns on the issue] (Note the petition must comprise fewer than 150 words (not including signatories (Note: the petition must comprise fewer than 150 words (not including signatories and contain at least 20 signatures.)<sup>6</sup>


**Signatories – please print clearly**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b> (Signatories do not have to include their addresses)	<b>Signature</b>
<b>11</b>			
<b>12</b>			
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<sup>6</sup> Whanganui District Council Standing Orders 14.2  
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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 such as telephone numbers, email address will be withheld unless the Principal Petitioner indicates that they do not object to those contact details being released.



# Protocols for Presentation of Verbal Petitions

**The Council provides the petitioner the opportunity to reinforce or elaborate on the points made in the petition by presenting the petition at a Council meeting.**

**The petitioner's presentation at the Council meeting must be conducted in accordance with the following procedures.**

## Procedures at the Council meeting

1. The Governance Services Team will contact the petitioner by telephone to advise the date and time the petitioner must be available to attend the Council meeting. The Governance Services Team will also discuss protocols for the meeting and ascertain expected numbers of supporters to attend. Please ensure that the petition covering letter includes the Principal Petitioner's contact details.
2. The presenting petitioner must arrive at least 15 minutes before the beginning of the meeting to confirm that they are will be addressing the Council.
3. If the presenting petitioner is not present when the petition is considered by the Council they will forfeit their opportunity to speak.
4. When the Council is ready to hear the petition the Chairperson will welcome the presenting petitioner to the meeting and invite them to sit at the presenter's table.
5. The presenting petitioner should introduce themselves and any persons in support. A maximum of five minutes is provided for the presenting petitioner to speak to the petition. This time may be strictly adhered to.
6. Councillors may ask questions of the presenting petitioner.
7. Addressing the Council provides the presenting petitioner the opportunity to reinforce or elaborate on points on the petition.
8. The presenting petitioner cannot question Council officers or Councillors or enter into debate.
9. The presenting petitioner must provide copies of any material including photographs to be tabled at the meeting in support of the petition to the Governance Services Team two working days before the meeting.

The material will be photocopied and made available to Councillors and the public.

No additional issues may be added to the original petition.
10. If at any time you have questions on these guidelines or when you present your petition, be assured that there will be Council staff at the meeting to provide assistance.

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The Office of the Ombudsmen  
P O Box 10-152  
70 The Terrace

**WELLINGTON 6143.**  
[www.ombudsmen.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsmen.parliament.nz)