

## Action Guide

# PRESENTING A SUBMISSION TO A SELECT COMMITTEE

Whether you are 14 or 40, a student or a doctor, all public submissions are given the same respect and value. You don't have to have any special knowledge (and you can be any age) to write a submission. All you need is an interest in what a bill or inquiry is about.

### Why write a submission?

Heaps of individuals, groups of people and organisations write submissions on bills. Organisations from the Automobile Association to University Students' Associations write submissions on bills they have an interest in.

People write submissions because they either like or don't like a bill. If they like the bill, they write to let the select committee know why they support the bill becoming a law.

If they dislike the bill, they write to object against the bill becoming law and explain why they think it is a bad idea. Some people also ask to present their submission in person and speak directly to the select committee.

### Getting active on a submission

Think about getting together with other young people on a bill you all feel strongly about and writing a group submission. If you are part of a youth group, the group could write a submission together.

Encourage other young people to make submissions. It is important young people submit their views on bills that affect them.

### What bills are open for submissions?

Most bills are advertised in newspapers around New Zealand to encourage submissions.

To find out what bills are asking for public submissions, go to [www.parliament.nz](http://www.parliament.nz) and search for 'bills before select committees'.

For bills that may be of interest to young people, go to [www.myd.govt.nz](http://www.myd.govt.nz).

### Learn about the bill

You don't need to actually read the entire bill, but make sure you know what's in it.

Find out more information about the bill at [www.parliament.nz](http://www.parliament.nz).

There you will find a short blurb about the bill, the date submissions are due and where you need to send your submission. You can also find one-page summaries of submissions relating to young people at [www.myd.govt.nz](http://www.myd.govt.nz).

You may also find links to a 'bill digest' on that particular bill. A bill digest is a guide written to assist MPs when they consider a bill. These are simple to understand and give you a good overview of the bill.

You can also read the 'Hansard', which is a written archive of the debate in Parliament about the bill. This will give you information about why the bill is happening and what MPs in Parliament think about it. There will be opinions for and against the bill in the Hansard.

If you are really keen, you can download the whole bill for free from [www.legislation.govt.nz](http://www.legislation.govt.nz).

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## Research to develop your key message

Some different ways to research bills:

- **WEB SEARCH:** Do an internet search on the bill and you will find a bunch of different opinions to help you develop your own opinion. Who do you agree with/ disagree with? Why?
- **TALK TO OTHER PEOPLE:** Your next door neighbour, your friends, your grandparents – basically anyone interested in the issue. As you talk with others, you will become clear about your thoughts on the topic.
- **NEWSPAPER RESEARCH:** If the bill is a hot topic in New Zealand, it will get lots of attention in the media, e.g. newspaper articles and letters to the editor. Cut these out and use them to update your views on the topic. If you disagree with the points of view, what would your argument be? This may be the beginning of your submission.

## Writing your submission

An effective and powerful submission is a simple one that explains your own or your group's views on the subject.

- Start with your key message about why you support or oppose the bill, or parts of it. You can write a submission on a small part of a bill – you don't need to have views on all of it.
- Use the rest of your submission to back up your key messages.
- Use bullet points rather than long sentences.
- Type it up or print it neatly.
- Include your name and address.
- Use one side of an A4 sheet (the same size as this action guide).

The trick to a good submission is being able to say **why** you think the way you do. What are the reasons you are for or against a bill becoming law?

Imagine there was a bill to make Saturdays a school day! Most school students would want to make a submission against the bill becoming a law.

However, saying no to school on Saturdays is not enough. What select committees want to know is **why** you oppose the bill becoming a law.

Submissions to Parliament are normally received in written form and can be reinforced through an oral presentation to the committee.

Online submissions for some items of business can now be made via a web form on the website [www.parliament.nz](http://www.parliament.nz). Check the website to see if this option is available for the bill that interests you.

Generally, submissions to select committees become public, which means that anyone can see what you (or your group) have said.

## Get a proofreader

Get someone to proofread your submission before you send it off. Here are some questions they can use as a guide when proofreading:

- Is the key message clear?
- What needs more explanation?
- Is there anything repetitive?
- Does it make sense?
- Does it keep to the subject?

## Make multiple copies

Make sure you check how many copies of your submission you need to send. The [www.parliament.nz](http://www.parliament.nz) website will tell you.

## Post it off before the deadline

Send your submission to the clerk of the committee before the closing date. Their details are different for each submission process and select committee. Find the clerk's address and the closing date for submissions at [www.parliament.nz](http://www.parliament.nz).

## Your voice heard

If a decision is different from what you wanted, it doesn't mean you weren't heard. Remember, a number of people may have written a submission who held a different viewpoint from yours.