



## Petitions

Petitioning is one of the traditional forms by which the public can have their say on issues affecting them. Council will accept written petitions from persons that have a direct interest in the Bellingen Shire Council Local Government Area, such as residents, landowners, and business owners.

### Guidelines

The guidelines for petitioning Council are as follows:

1. Petitions must be on paper and include the following:
  - a. The subject of the petition.
  - b. Identification of the principal petitioner.
  - c. Name, address, phone number or email address, and signatures in original writing of each petitioners.
  - d. Petitions should be prepared on the form prescribed.
2. The subject of the petition must not exceed 250 words and be limited to items where Council has responsibility or control. If the petition relates to a matter over which Council has no responsibility or influence Council will return the petition to the principal petitioner and, where possible, provide information as to where the petition should be re-directed.
3. All petitions must:
  - a. be written (other than pencil), contain the request of the petitioners or signatories and be signed by at least five (5) people whose name and address is clearly legible. Items with less than 5 signatures will be regarded as a joint letter. See below.
  - b. contain the request of the petition on each page along the lines:

“We the undersigned hereby petition Bellingen Shire Council to.....”

Any signature appearing on a page which does not bear the text of the whole of the petition or request may not be considered by Council.

- c. not to contain attachments such as letters, photos or other documentation. Attachments will not be considered by Council as part of a petition and are not able to be returned
  - d. not to refer to any Universal Resource Locators (URLs) or web links in in the petition.
4. Petitions that are vexatious, abusive, propose action that is unlawful, or are otherwise inappropriate will not be considered.
5. Once submitted, the petition will be scrutinised by a Council Officer to ensure it meets all requirements, before being presented to the next Ordinary Meeting of Council. To assist Council in processing your petition, please ensure a Lead Petitioner is nominated as the contact person.
6. To avoid breaches of the privacy legislation, most petitions shall not be included in the attachments to the Business Paper but only tabled at Council meetings.
7. Where a petition is provided in response to planning proposals or development applications on public exhibition, any submission made (including personal information) may be made publicly available and may be included in Council's business paper and on its website. If you do not wish your submission to be made publicly available you must provide Council with written reasons for this.
8. Council will not consider anonymous submissions.

## Joint Letters

A letter received with signatures on it and without the format of the petition is considered a joint letter. Joint letters will be forwarded to the appropriate officer for action and be dealt with as general correspondence.

## Submitting a petition

Paper petitions should be submitted in one of the following ways:

1. Mail - Bellingen Shire Council, PO Box 117, Bellingen NSW 2454
2. Delivered in person to Bellingen Shire Council - 33 Hyde Street, Bellingen.

An acknowledgement notice will be issued to the Lead Petitioner to confirm receipt of the petition, the final count of valid signatures and details of when the petition will be presented to Council.

The links below provide for a petition lodgement form and a sample petition.

### **Attending Council or Committee meetings**

The Council welcome all members of the community to attend Council and Committee meetings. Seating is provided in the public gallery at the rear of the Council chamber.

People attending or addressing a Council meeting must conduct themselves with due respect to the Council and observe the Council's Code of Conduct and Code of Meeting Practice, that is they must not disrupt the conduct of the meeting and treat all people with respect, courtesy, compassion and sensitivity and not insult, denigrate or make defamatory or personal reflects on or impute motive to the Council, staff or other members of the public